BUDDHISM IN KASHMIR & LADAKH

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by

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The book can be had from
Shri P.N. Ganhar
at

14A/71 W.E.A.
Karol Bagh, New Delhi.

or

Motiyar, Rainawari,
Srinagar, Kashmir.

(With eighteen illustrations).

Price Rs. 16/- per copy.

Printed by Shri P. N. Varma at the Tribune Press, Amb Cantt. and published by Shri Prem Nath Ganhar, 14A/71 W.E.A., Karol Bagh, New Delhi.

To

the memory

of our revered father

Pandit Gobind Joo Ganhar,

to whom we owe our interest

in Buddhism.

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FOREWORD

The celebration of the 2500th Buddha Jayanti was hailed with widespread interest all over India. Homage was paid to Gautama Buddha; the Buddha Jayanti intensified the appreciation of the Buddhist doctrine and, I believe, persuaded a very large number of people to study it with zeal and devotion. With our ever-increasing ties of friendship with China, Japan and countries in South East Asia our reverence for Gautama Buddha has become deep, and we are proud that he was an Indian, and was an instrument for raising and spreading the name and fame of his motherland India in many parts of the world in those distant times. The revival of Buddhism in India is closely associated with the rise of the National Movement in the country, and it is not a mere coincidence that when India won its freedom the Indians thought it fit to seek shelter and refuge for all time under the Dharma Chakra (the wheel of the law) which is a part of our National Flag. That is, however, another story.

The life history of Gautama Buddha is now fairly well-known, but not of what happened to Buddhism in the succeeding centuries after his death. The discovery of the edicts of Ashoka has added vastly to our knowledge, but still it is fragmentary and not thorough. The attempt made in the present book by Shri J.N. Ganhar and Shri P.N. Ganhar of preparing a

connected narrative about Buddhism in Kashmir is, therefore, very welcome. Kashmir has always been treated as a part of India from ages past, but how close has been that connection and how intimate was the intercourse between the people of the Valley of Kashmir and of the plains of India is not so widely known as it should be. And then, while readers of travels of the famous Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang who came to India in the seventh century knew that he entered India through Kashmir and spent two years there before travelling on to India, it was not known that this intellectual traffic between China and India was not a one-way traffic. On the other hand, numerous Indian Buddhist monks, of whom Kumarajiva and Gunavarman were among the most prominent, used to visit China, stay there many years and propagate the excellent doctrine. The name of Kumarajiva who went to China early in the fifth century is still widely venerated there. He translated into the Chinese language much of the Buddhist scripture.

This book tells a fascinating story of what may be called "the rise and fall of Buddhism in Kashmir". Time and again it gained great ascendancy among the people; the rulers and their subjects believed in the doctrine, and it had its purifying effect upon their social and material life. I am sure it ennobled them. But then, time and again, it succumbed to the older faiths and beliefs.

During the progress of centuries large numbers of 'Viharas' were built in Kashmir; remains of a few still exist. One thing strikes the reader greatly, and that is the presence of stupas enshrining something or other associated with the person of Gautama Buddha himself. Very often it is a bit of the sacred tooth. In Leh was enshrined his spitting bowl itself. How these things managed to be sent about in those difficult

times through the vast areas of India, North and South, is difficult to say, but that it did happen, there can be no doubt.

I am sure that this book will be widely read and I can only hope that it will deepen our interest in Buddhist history and that other scholars may be led to follow the authors' example and attempt to write connected stories of the rise and fall of Buddhism in different parts in India.

NEW DELHI (DR.) KAILAS NATH KATJU
July, 1956

PREFACE

It is a commonplace of history that Buddhism is no longer alive in the land of its birth. But that is not quite correct. Buddhism continues to be a living faith in some areas along the northern boundary of India. Among these is the extensive Ladakh district of Kashmir State.

Kashmir as the 'paradise on earth' or the land of Hindu pilgrimages is well-known. But few people know that it has been one of the most important and most famous lands in the history of the spread and development of Buddhism. It is not generally known that Kashmir, in the past, enjoyed such high reputation as a centre of Buddhist learning that scholars from the neighbouring countries did not consider their education complete without a visit to the Happy Valley to learn at the feet of the masters there. Also, that Kashmiri scholars and monks braved many dangers and often risked their lives to carry the 'excellent doctrine' to their neighbours in the northern and eastern regions of Central Asia, China and Tibet. Some Kashmiri monks are known to have crossed the seas to propagate the faith in Ceylon, Indonesia and China.

Now that the world is celebrating the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's *parinirvana* an attempt has been

made, in the present volume, to trace the rise and fall of Buddhism in the Valley and to put down in such detail as the available material would permit, the contribution that Kashmiris made to developments in the faith and in its propagation abroad; the patronage it enjoyed at the hands not only of the Buddhist rulers but of many Hindu and Muslim rulers as well and the great influence it has had on the people of the Valley: their art, architecture, religion and culture.

Buddhism is generally believed to have come to Kashmir in the time of Emperor Ashoka but as will be seen in the book, it was prevalent there long before his time. And from Kashmir it had travelled to the neighbouring northern regions including Ladakh where it is the predominant faith even now.

For the sake of convenience the book has been divided into four parts. The first inevitably deals with the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha—without which no study of Buddhism in any region can be understood or appreciated properly. The second part may be described as the history of the rise and fall of Buddhism in Kashmir. The third part deals with Buddhism in Ladakh and the other frontier regions of Kashmir State. As Buddhism continues to be professed by the majority of people in the still comparatively unknown region of Ladakh, it has been considered necessary to give, in addition to its Buddhist history, a description of its simple, unsophisticated people and their Buddhist institutions and practices. The fourth part of the book contains an account of Buddhist revival in Kashmir State side by side with the rise of a strong nationalist movement there, and, how like certain other parts of the State, Ladakh—the land of Buddhists—was saved by

the Indian Army and Air Force when, in 1947-48, it was the victim of unprovoked aggression from Pakistan.

As Buddhism has had a long and fairly continuous history in Kashmir, the book will be found to contain an outline of the history of Kashmir itself.

After this brief synopsis the only thing that remains for us to do in this preface is to express our gratitude to the numerous friends and well-wishers whose co-operation has made this book possible.

It is a matter of pleasure for us to acknowledge our gratitude to Dr. K.N. Katju, who, in spite of his many preoccupations, found time to go through the book and write the *Foreword*. We are also deeply beholden to Pt. Premnath Kaul, Pt. Durgadas Vuthoo, Pt. Sardari Lal Kashkari (Shali), and Pt. Dwarkanath Razdan who have rendered much assistance. Other friends who deserve our thanks are Shri M.K. Dharmaraja Jain, Shri M.N. Kaul, Shri G.K. Kaul, Shri Narain Bhatia, Shri R.C. Dhar, Shri Jogendranath, Shri S.N. Bhat, Shri N.L. Chatta and Mr. Abdur Rashid.

The various publications which have in any way been made use of in this work have been mentioned in either the body of the book or in the foot-notes. A bibliography is also attached at the end.

AUTHORS



Statue of the Buddha in *abhayamudra* excavated at Pandnthan by the Kashmir Government Archaeological Department.



:ahamaya with her sister in the Lumbini Garden just before tl
rth of the Buddha. In the image excavated at Pandrethan by tl
ashmir Archaeological Department note the typical Kashmi
ear-ornament.

CHAPTER I

THE BUDDHA AND HIS GOSPEL

About two thousand and five hundred years ago the Indian earth was hallowed by the presence of one who through self-perfection had attained to godhead. He was the Buddha, the Enlightened One.

The story of the Buddha is well-known. His father Suddhodana was the chief of a Kshatriya tribe whose territory comprised areas on both sides of what is now the Indo-Nepal border. Its capital, Kapilvastu, lay about a hundred miles north of Banaras. The prince was born in the famous Lumbini Gardens (about twelve miles from Kapilvastu) in Nepal Terai when his mother Mahamaya was on her way from the capital to her father's place Devadaha. Christened Siddhartha at the time of his birth, he came to be known also as Sakyamuni—the sage of the Sakya clan—and Gautama Buddha—the Enlightened One of the Gautama *gotra*—into which he was born. He is also referred to as the Tathagata—"he who has arrived at the truth".

Mayadevi having passed away only seven days after his birth, Gautama was, therefore, doubly precious in the eyes of his father and his step-mother, Mahaprajapati, who was a sister of the deceased queen. Gautama's birth had been predicted by Brahman

astrologers. Later when he was born they told his father that his son would live to be a universal monarch if he chose to live a worldly life and a remover of the people's ignorance if he chose the life of a wandering ascetic. Particular care was, therefore, taken by his parents to surround him with all comforts and luxuries and to keep him away from the woes and ills that afflict humanity.

The first twentynine years of his life were passed in the midst of pleasures and plenty. At sixteen he was married to his beautiful cousin Yashodhara whom he won in a contest of arms, and by her had a son, named Rahula.

A sudden transformation came over him in the fateful twentyninth year of his life when he decided to leave the newly born child, his wife and father and become an ascetic. Legend has it that this development followed his seeing an old man, a sick man, and a dead man while driving out of the palace among the people. When asked as to what these distressing sights meant his simple-minded charioteer had but one reply, that such suffering was common to all men. This set him a-thinking and attracted by the calm serenity of a wandering ascetic whom he came across soon after he decided to go forth into the homeless life to probe the riddle of human suffering.

Though his fond parents spared no efforts to keep him away from all earthly suffering yet it would be naive to assume that this was his first contact with it. The truth is that in spite of all his comforts and luxuries Gautama's acute mind was constantly troubled by the grim realities of life like disease, death and old age and the unsatisfactory and evanescent nature of worldly

pleasures. The surfeit of pleasure with which he was always surrounded defeated its very purpose and increased the anguish of his soul. Weary of the endless rounds of aimless pleasures he had often thought of renouncing home and its pleasures. With the birth of his child he felt the bonds tying him to a worldly life were getting stronger and thus making an escape from it more and more difficult. He therefore decided to tear himself away from wife, child, father and all immediately and to go into the wilderness to find a solution to the problem of human suffering and sorrow. So one night when darkness had descended upon the world, he bid a silent farewell to his sleeping wife and child and went forth into the homeless life alone.

He betook himself to two noted sages of his time, but their philosophy failed to satisfy him. Then with five others he retired to a jungle to meditate and for six long years gave himself up to fasting and terrible penances. He was reduced to a mere skeleton but the desired light was nowhere in sight. Ultimately he came to the conclusion that self-mortification was not the way to Truth and Enlightenment. He took a bold step and decided to abandon all physical austerities. Then one night, the night of *Vaishakha Poornima*, the Full Moon day of May in the year 544 B.C.*, the Light of Truth dawned upon him while he was meditating under a tree, the celebrated Bodhi tree, in the jungles of Gaya.

The Buddha saw life as a continuous stream punctuated with a succession of births and deaths. The few pleasures that a particular life in the series had to offer

*According to another view this is the date of the Buddha's death or *Mahaparinirvana*. Three great events of the Buddha's life—his birth, his Enlightenment and his final passing—are believed to have fallen on the same day, *viz.*, *Vaishakha Poornima*.

were overbalanced by suffering and pain. These latter were due to ignorance and desire—ignorance of the worthlessness of earthly aims and pleasures and the desire to pursue the same. This desire or selfish craving was what led to rebirth in this world of misery, for evil done in one life had to be atoned for in future lives. So if one stilled all selfish craving, eschewed all evil and pursued only the good, he would be spared suffering in this life and rebirth hereafter. The Noble Eightfold Path he prescribes for attaining freedom from suffering and rebirth consists of right views, right intention, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. It is the middle way between the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification.

A number of writers have fallen into the error of regarding Buddhism as a revolt against Hinduism. That this was far from the case will be readily seen if we consider the intellectual climate in which it was born and some of its principal tenets.

The Aryan invaders who had originally settled in the north-west of India were, in course of time, forced—under pressure of growing numbers—to move east and south. But this spreading out over the major part of a vast peninsula was by no means easy. They had not only to contend against a hostile indigenous population but had also to overcome the physical difficulties involved in a long march of this kind. Naturally therefore they had little time to think of the why and wherefore of things. With the passage of centuries, however, they succeeded in consolidating their hold over northern India.

Increased use of agriculture and the settled conditions of life that the consolidation of Aryan rule brought

in its train resulted in a great increase in wealth and prosperity. These in turn led to more leisure in which intellectual and cultural activity found full scope. The old values were subjected to a searching re-examination and new ones laid down. There was no more the blind acceptance of the values and practices of a bygone age when owing to the ever-present threat of war and the hard struggle for existence the Aryans had to be afraid of Nature and priest alike. They could now afford to challenge both, and this they did in ample measure.

It was this challenge which gave rise to those highest flowerings of the human mind which are enshrined in the *Upanishads*—metaphysical theses in which some of the most daring attempts have been made to probe the mystery of this unintelligible universe. But side by side with the *Upanishads* a number of heretical sects also grew up. The materialistic Charvakas, for example, dismissed the concepts of soul and *atman* as just nonsense. They had little regard for gods and scriptures and held belief in religion to be a mistake. Like them the Ajivikas also had no faith in the theory of *karma*.

The dates of the Buddha's life are not certain. But it is now generally held that he was born about 563 B.C. and passed away in 483 B. C. at the age of 80.

The Buddha's manhood was thus passed in the sixth century B.C. Now this was a time of great intellectual ferment in India. Some of the *Upanishads* had already been composed; others were taking shape. The whole of northern India was ringing with philosophic disputation. These discussions were not confined to the dwelling places of the hermits and the learned alone. The protagonists of various view-points literally carried their

controversies to the market-place. They went from place to place and held public debates and discussions to win adherents and to overcome opponents. It was in this "age of amazingly free thought and a thousand experiments in philosophy" that Gautama was born and grew up. He not only acquired skill in the military arts but also acquainted himself with the philosophical theories current in his time. Like his senior contemporary, Mahavira—founder of Jainism—the Buddha's compassionate heart was always moved by the afflictions that man is heir to. In fact the very luxuries with which his fond parents had surrounded him made him the more aware of the grim realities of human suffering and he felt an inner compulsion to find out how such suffering could be ended for ever.

Gautama's renunciation was not a revolt against Hinduism or even ceremonialism or any other ism for the matter of that. It was a quest to save himself from being reborn in this world full of misery and to save other human beings from the same dreadful fate, to find salvation for himself and the suffering humanity.

From practical experience on this journey he found that the barren ritualism of the Brahman clergy and the torturous austerities of the ascetics availed little. He also saw that the spiritual claims of an exclusive type on the part of the higher castes—Brahmans and Kshatriyas—had no justification whatsoever. He therefore had no use for such views. The doctrine he preached was absolutely free of dogma and priestcraft and taught a way of salvation which was available to all, irrespective of colour, caste or profession. In it the poor and the rich, the high and the lowly all united as do the rivers in the sea. His was a humane religion identical with morality.

The universe, according to the Buddha, is governed by law, the Moral Law or *Dharma*, and if a man follows the path of true morality he can elevate himself to Buddhahood, to the state of supreme Enlightenment. *Yagnas* or sacrifices involving costly ritual and the sacrifice of innocent animals, and the worship of supernatural beings, etc., are of no avail. What counts for self-perfection is self-effort of the right kind only. This consists in following the Noble Eightfold Path already described and the five rules of morality. These latter known as *Pansil**, enjoin upon the believer to refrain from killing or inflicting injury on living things, to refrain from taking what is not given, to refrain from lying, to refrain from taking intoxicants and to refrain from being unchaste.

That Buddhism was not a revolt against Hinduism is also seen from the fact that the Buddha took from it the theories of *karma* and rebirth. He was no doubt opposed to caste and denounced the practice of sacrificing to the gods. But he also believed, like the Hindus, that every act of good or of evil done by man is rewarded or punished, in this life or in later lives. The reward of the good life, the moral life, according to the Buddha, is the attainment of *nirvana*, a state in which, as the most eminent living Indian philosopher† says, "the individual overcomes ignorance, breaks the power of his own deeds to drag him back into expiation, ceases to desire and to regret and attains enlightenment" and "passes into the world of being as distinct from that of existence, being which is free from form and formlessness, from pain and delight", and rebirth in this world of suffering and sorrow. This conception of *nirvana*, it will easily be seen

**Pansil* is an abbreviation of *Pancha Shila*.

†Dr. Ṣ. Ṛaḍhaḳrishṇaṇ.

is not in essence different from the Hindu conception of *moksha* or release from the cycle of births and deaths and union with the Supreme Reality.

The Buddha had started on the Great Quest not for his salvation alone. He wanted to bring salvation to the whole of mankind. He had renounced a princely life not because of any personal sorrows or suffering but on account of the sorrow and suffering he saw around him. When therefore he succeeded in attaining Enlightenment and Deliverance he decided to show the way to salvation to others also. He therefore went forth to preach his gospel, the *Dhamma*.

The first sermon was delivered in the famous Deer Park at Sarnath near Banaras to the five ascetics who had departed from him in disgust when he decided to turn his back on the path of stark asceticism. It was in this sermon that he first taught his favourite Four Noble Truths. These are : life is full of suffering and sorrow; these are due to *trishna* or selfish desire which leads to rebirth; suffering and sorrow can be brought to an end by eradicating *trishna*; this last can be done by following the Noble Eightfold Path.

From the very beginning Buddhism was a missionary faith; it had to be. The first missionary of the faith was the Buddha himself. With the sermon at Sarnath he set in motion the Wheel of *Dhamma* or Righteousness. Thereafter for over forty years till his death, he went on propagating his views, making disciples and organising them into the *Sangha*—the Brotherhood of Buddhist monks—which spread the faith far and wide. Among the early converts were Sariputra and Moggallana who later became the chief disciples of the Master.

Buddhism spread rapidly in Magadha and the adjoining territories during the lifetime of its founder. A

not inconsiderable factor responsible for this was the magnetic personality of the Master himself. He has been described as "handsome, pleasant to look upon, inspiring trust, gifted with great beauty of complexion, fine in presence, stately to behold, virtuous......and with a pleasant voice and polite address, with no passion of lust left in him nor any fickleness of mind."

The facts of his life evoked admiration all round. Here was a man who had renounced the pleasures of a princely home for the robes of an ascetic, a blue-blooded aristocrat who treated on terms of equality even the meanest in the land, a master intellect who was singularly free from arrogance and pride. A model of virtue, simplicity and humility, the Buddha had love and compassion for all creation, including those who tried to harm him. His disciples too, by their exemplary life of piety and renunciation and their sympathy for the poor and the afflicted, soon won the love and reverence of the people.

The simplicity of his message and the democratic set-up of the new faith also won it large numbers of adherents. There were, in it, no secret *mantras* and no intricate or elaborate rites. Unlike the abstruse doctrines contained in the *Upanishads* and other religious works, the simple truths of the new faith, explained to the people in the vernacular of the day, were easily understood. Buddhism satisfied the spiritual desire of the masses by giving them a simple religion free from expensive ritual and the domination of priests.

As has already been noted, the Buddha's was an age of great prosperity in which a class of rich merchants and bankers had grown up. But with all their wealth they could not equal in status the Brahmans and the

Kshatriyas. In the new faith, however, there were no distinctions on grounds of birth, caste, or profession. Therefore, they embraced it eagerly. Munificent gifts are known to have been made to the *Sangha* by some of these merchants and bankers.

The new faith was open to all who wanted to follow the path of morality. None was refused admission. Ambapali, a noted courtesan of the time and Sunita, a scavenger, were as welcome as any of the Rajas who sought admission. Even the fallen and the lowly could attain salvation by following the Eightfold Path. The *Sangha* which at first was open to men only was later thrown open to women also.

The Buddha's is a rare instance of the prophet who was honoured in his own land in his lifetime. Not only did he enjoy the love and reverence of the lower and the middle classes but he also commanded the highest esteem of the Kshatriyas and the Brahmans. His disciples included members of all the castes.

The spread of Buddhism received a great impetus with the self-sought conversion of Bimbisara, King of Magadha, and a large number of his subjects when the Buddha paid a visit to his capital, Rajagriha. Other *Kshatriya* princes to accept the new faith included his father, Suddodhana and his own son, Rahula. King Prasenjit of Koshala also paid him homage and after the death of Bimbisara his powerful son, Ajatashatru also became an ardent follower. His devotees included a number of ladies belonging to different royal families.

After a ministry of fortyfive years the Buddha passed away at Kusinara (corresponding to Kasia in Gorakhpur District of Uttar Pradesh) in the territory of the Mallas—a republican tribe. The high esteem in which the

founder of Buddhism was held in his time is shown by the fact that at his death there were claims for a share of the sacred ashes from all the people among whom he had lived and preached. These included, besides the powerful Magadhas under Ajatashatru, the proud Lichchavis of Vaishali and the sturdy Sakyas among whom he was born. The Mallas, it is stated, at first refused to part with such a treasure but agreed to do so later on the pursuasion of a Brahman. Accordingly the sacred relics were divided into eight parts and distributed among Rajas of the neighbouring territories. Stupas were erected over them and these in course of time became places of pilgrimage for the faithful.

BUDDHISM IN KASHMIR

CHAPTER II

SURRENDRA—THE FIRST BUDDHIST KING OF KASHMIR

It is commonly believed that Buddhism came to Kashmir in the reign of Ashoka. But that is not correct. The new faith had travelled to the Happy Valley much earlier. Buddhism was prevalent in Kashmir in the time of the native king Surrendra who ruled some time after the Buddha but before Ashoka.

Kashmir has had intimate relations with the rest of India from remote antiquity. The first known ruler of Kashmir, Gonanda, mentioned by the Kashmiri historian Kalhana Pandit in his *Rajatarangini* was related to Jarasandha who ruled Magadha about the time of the Mahabharata war. The big events which took place in mid-India had their repercussions on Kashmir. This was as much the case in the realms of thought and philosophy as in that of politics.

Kashmir's connection with the rest of the country was not confined to politics or the ruling circles only. Kashmir enjoyed great importance as it lay near the trade routes which connected India with her neighbours in the north and the north-west. Some of these routes actually passed through Kashmir. Also the exquisite beauty with which Nature has endowed the valley so

richly had endeared it to sages and savants in the olden days also. Sheltered in mountain fastnesses the Happy Valley was an oasis of peace for those who wanted to keep themselves away from the din and bustle of life. Its verdant eminences and sylvan glades lent themselves ideally for meditation and pursuit of spiritual perfection.

We have already seen how in the Upanishadic age *sadhus* and scholars ranged the length and breadth of this vast country to propagate their views. Also we know that the Tathagata bade his disciples : "Go into all lands and preach this gospel. Tell them that the poor and the lowly, the rich and the high, are all one and that all castes unite in this religion as do the rivers in the sea."

Since Kashmir had intimate relations with Magadha and other States in mid-India from remote antiquity it is only reasonable to assume that a number of Buddhist monks had found their way into Kashmir long before the arrival of Ashoka and his missionaries and had succeeded in establishing Buddhism as one of the living faiths in the Valley.

Surrendra is perhaps the first Buddhist ruler of Kashmir. At any rate he was the first royal patron of the new faith in the Valley. Surrendra belonged to a dynasty whose members are known for their religious endowments. His father Khagendra had created two such endowments, one of them having left its name to the existing village of Khonamuh near Pampor. True to the family tradition, Surrendra erected the first *viharas* in Kashmir. One of these was in the city of Sauraka (corresponding to Suru beyond the Zojila) which he built near the country of the Dards. This vihara or monastery was known as *Narendrabhavana*.

The other vihara built by him was at Saurasa, corresponding to the village Sowur on the shore of Anchar Lake to the north of Srinagar.

Kalhana to whom we are indebted for the early history of Kashmir pays a high tribute to Surrendra's personal character. According to him Surrendra's way of life was wonderous and he "kept himself from sinfulness" —facts which confirm that he was a follower of the Buddha.

Surrendra seems to have been a bachelor all his life. At his death, the kingdom of Kashmir passed into the hands of Godhara who belonged to a different dynasty. Suvarna who succeeded Godhara, was in turn followed by his son Janaka. Described "as a father to his subjects", Janaka was also very favourably disposed towards Buddhism. In addition to the grant of an *agrahara** to Brahmans, he founded a vihara at Jalora (corresponding to Zolur in Zainagir *pargana*).

After Janaka's powerful son Shachinara, the kingdom of Kashmir passed into the hands of the illustrious Ashoka.

**Agrahara* was a grant, especially a land grant, to a religious institution or the priests who looked after it.

ASHOKA

Ashoka is a landmark in Indian history. This greatest of India's kings was the son of Bindusara and the grandson of the mighty Chandragupta, the founder of the Maurya dynasty and the first creator of a united India. Ashoka ruled over a vast empire covering the whole of India except the extreme south. It included parts of Afghanistan and Baluchistan also. Kashmir formed part of Ashoka's territories. But he did not conquer it, as has wrongly been suggested by so many modern historians. According to Kalhana Kashmir passed into Ashoka's hands on the death, without a male issue, of Shachinara. Obviously the ruling dynasty of Kashmir must have been intimately related to the Maurya dynasty.

Ashoka was formally crowned at Patliputra, the Mauryan capital, four years after he had secured the throne on the death of his father in or about 273 B.C. Much is not known of the early years of his reign which presumably were spent in consolidating his position and extending his empire. He effected the epoch-making conquest of the rebellious Kalingas* in 261 B.C. *i.e.* about twelve years after he had secured the throne.

*Kalingas were the people inhabiting Kalinga on the eastern

As is well-known the Kalinga war proved to be a turning point in the life of the Emperor and produced results of a far-reaching character in the history of the East. The widespread destruction and bloodshed accompanying this war produced such a profound impression on his mind that he decided to give up war altogether.

Shocked by the horrors of war, he now became an apostle of peace. The Shaivite Ashoka now turned more and more to Buddhism—a faith which had already made a strong impression on his mind when an innocent Buddhist monk put into his prison escaped unhurt on being thrown into a cauldron of boiling water. Finally Ashoka is stated to have been converted to the new faith by Upagupta, a Brahman convert of Mathura.

In place of conquest by war the Emperor now adopted the method of *Dharmavijaya*—conquest by piety or *Dharma*. Preachers were sent to different countries, including Burma, Ceylon, Egypt , Greece and Syria to propagate the new faith. Within the Empire also preachers were sent to different territories situated far away from the capital. The preacher sent to Kashmir was named Madhyantika or Majjahantika. The Emperor himself undertook frequent journeys to outlying provinces like Kashmir. Officers of State were also required to go on tour every few years when in addition to their normal duties they were expected to instruct the people in the Law—the principles of the *Dharma*. For the guidance and edification of the common people the Law was also inscribed on rocks and stone pillars.

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coast of India. Kalinga corresponded roughly to present-day Orissa and Andhra.

The Buddhism which Ashoka taught was practical morality comprising the principles of truth, justice, tolerance, love and compassion towards all living things. No coercion was used and no wars were undertaken to spread the new faith. In fact Ashoka's is the singular example of a ruler renouncing war, not after defeat but after victory.

Though himself a staunch Buddhist, Ashoka was not intolerant of other creeds. He had respect for their gods and extended his patronage to their priests also. Gifts were made to both *shramanas* (Buddhist monks) and Brahmans. One of his inscriptions deprecates the habit of exalting one's own faith at the expense of others'. These inscriptions deservedly refer to him as *Devanamapiya* (beloved of the gods) and *Piyadasi* (humane.)

Ashoka's was the first secular welfare state. In one of his inscriptions he announces that all his subjects are his beloved children and that he would not discriminate against any of them because of their diverse creeds. He lived up to this promise. He was always anxious to promote his subjects' welfare—both spiritual and physical—without any distinctions of caste or creed. In addition to the measures outlined above he built a number of temples and monasteries where religious instruction was widely diffused. Trees were planted and wells dug on the roads to provide water and shade to the weary travellers. The harsh laws of his predecessors were abolished. The Buddhist law of *ahimsa* or non-violence was carried out into practice and the slaughter of animals was gradually stopped. Hospitals were erected not only for men but for animals and birds also.

Though situated far away from the capital (Patliputra) Kashmir appears to have enjoyed all the benefits

of the great Emperor's benign rule. This is borne out by Kalhana's account which, except in one or two particulars, fully accords with historical facts. The Kashmir historian who wrongly places Ashoka about a thousand years before his time says that the houses in Shrinagari, the Ashokan capital of Kashmir, were 'resplendent with prosperity and wealth'. According to some Buddhist writers including Taranatha it was the Buddhist preacher Madhyantika who introduced saffron cultivation into Kashmir. This is stated to have brought about increased prosperity of the people of the Valley.

Kalhana also represents Ashoka as a follower of the Buddha and describes him as one who had "extinguished sin and sorrow." His account also bears out the Emperor's religious tolerance and piety.

Buddhism and Shaivism flourished side by side in Kashmir during Ashoka's time and received the Emperor's patronage in almost equal measure. Kalhana who was himself a Shaiva has recorded that Ashoka built two Shiva temples at the shrine of Vijayeshvara (Bijbihara). Also he had this ancient Shiva shrine enclosed in a stone wall. In Vitastatra (Vethavutur) and at Shuskaletra (Hukhalitar) he built a number of viharas and stupas. The *chaitya** built by him in Vitastatra town is stated to have been so high that the eye could not compass the extent of its height.

Vethavutur is traditionally regarded as the source of the Vitasta or Jhelum by the Hindus of Kashmir who offer worship at the springs here on the thirteenth of the bright fortnight of *Bhadoon* (September). This date is regarded by them as the birthday of the goddess Vitasta, which is another name for Shiva's consort,

**Chaitya* is a Buddhist temple.

Parvati. Worship was perhaps offered at Vernag also formerly but when the Moghul Emperor Jehangir took a fancy to the spring there and laid a royal garden around it, it was limited to the two springs at Vethavutur only. A Hindu temple and some ancient remains exist to this day at Vernag which is a beauty-spot at the foot of the Pir Panchal mountain. Vernag is at a distance of about fifty miles from Srinagar.

Buddhist relics have been found at Hukalitar which is at a distance of about eighteen miles from Srinagar and about nine miles from the village of Badgam. One such relic, found about forty years ago, was a life size image of the Buddha. More recently—about a year ago—a stone statuette of the Buddha in the *dhyanamudra* was discovered in Badgam Tehsil. In the image the Buddha is seated in *padmasana* on a lotus-throne.

Ashoka has given us the name Srinagar for the capital of Kashmir. The Ashokan capital, Shrinagari, was on the outskirts of the existing city at the now little known village of Pandrethan. The capital was shifted to its present site further down the Vitasta by Pravarasena II who ruled towards the later part of the sixth century A.D. The new capital which was named Pravarapura after its founder came, in course of time, to be known as Srinagar, while the Ashokan capital was referred to as Puranadhishthana*—the old capital. Excavations carried out at this place some years back brought to light the remains of two Buddhist stupas and the courtyard of a monastery. In addition to a number of Hindu images, a large-size image of a *Bodhisattva* was also found. During his visit to Kashmir in the seventh century A.D. the celebrated Chinese pilgrim

*Pandrethan is derived from the Sanskrit *Puranadhishthana*.

Hiuen Tsang or Yuan Chwang noticed four Ashokan stupas—'of wonderful height and great magnificence'—each of which contained relics of the Buddha's body. According to him the Emperor built five hundred *sangharamas* (monasteries) for the sake of *arhats* and later gave the Valley itself as a gift to the Sangha.

Buddhism spread rapidly in Kashmir as elsewhere in India during the Emperor's reign. But Buddhism was not unknown in Kashmir before. Already we have noticed the erection of the first viharas in Kashmir in the time of Surrendra.

The Tibetan writer Taranatha records that Madhyantika, who spent over twenty years in Kashmir, found twelve viharas in existence at the time of his arrival. Buddhist monks living in Kashmir are stated to have been specially invited to the Buddhist Council which Ashoka called at Patliputra towards the end of his reign to reconcile monks of different schools of Buddhist thought. These monks who belonged to the Sarvastivada* school—a subject of the Theravadins—are stated to have taken refuge in Kashmir earlier on account of the hostility of their opponents in Magadha. According to Buddhist tradition Ashoka was more favourably inclined towards the Sarvastivadins in the later part of his reign.

The Buddhist Council called by Ashoka was presided over by Upagupta, according to some, and by Tissa son of Moggalli, according to others. It was on the advice of Moggalliputta Tissa, a religious adviser of the Emperor that he is believed to have deputed Madhyantika for the propagation of the faith in Kashmir and Gandhara.

***Sarvastivada* is derived from the words *Sarvam asti* which mean 'all things exist.'

Madhyantika was a Buddhist monk of Varanashi (Banaras) which he left on account of an enormous increase in the number of his disciples whom he did not want to be a burden on his lay devotees. From Banaras he went to a place near Mathura and after a three-year stay there he was sent to Kashmir.

In Kashmir, Madhyantika settled down on the bank of a lake and propagated the faith for about twenty years. According to Taranatha, Madhyantika was accompanied by many monks and lay devotees. Hiuen Tsang says that five hundred monks had taken up their residence in Kashmir in the time of Ashoka.

Buddhist texts credit Madhyantika with the performance of a number of miracles in Kashmir. These excited the people's wonder and admiration. But his propagation of Buddhism in the Valley was not at once welcomed. At first it evoked the wrath of the *Nagas*, who held sway over the popular mind. Later, however, seeing his supernatural powers they also submitted and listened to his discourses.

ASHOKA'S SUCCESSORS

Buddhism suffered a temporary eclipse in Kashmir during the reign of Ashoka's successors, Jalauka and Damodara.

Jalauka whom Kalhana represents as Ashoka's son, was a staunch Shaiva. He had perhaps been sent to Kashmir during the later part of the Emperor's lifetime to clear the Valley of *Mlecchas* (barbarians) who were harassing the people. He not only accomplished the assigned task but also conquered—after the death of the Emperor—a number of territories including Kanyakubja (Kanauj).

Buddhism had achieved remarkable success in Kashmir in Ashoka's time and all distinctions of caste—if there were any—seem to have been wiped out. This is borne out by the fact that Jalauka settled in Kashmir the four castes as well as upright men with legal experience from Kanyakubja. With the help of the Brahmans he got from the conquered territory he tried to reconvert the people to the old faith. But as in Ashoka's time no force was used. The method adopted was one of discussion and argument. Large numbers of Buddhist preachers are said to have been vanquished in argument by Jalauka's *guru* Avadhuta. The result

was that traditional observances were revived and offerings to Naga and other deities came to be made again by the people. The grateful Nagas placed themselves at his disposal and even offered their daughters to him in marriage.

Though at first hostile to Buddhists, Jalauka later became more friendly towards them and constructed a big vihara, the *Krityashramavihara*, in the vicinity of Baramulla. Popular tradition remembered this change in his attitude in the form of the following interesting legend.

Once the king's sleep having been disturbed by the sound of clarions from some viharas he issued orders for their demolition. This greatly upset the Buddhists some of whom plotted to bring about his death. They appointed a Buddhist witch (*kritya*) for the accomplishment of the nefarious deed. This frail lady approached Jalauka for food when he was on his way to Vijayeshvara. Getting a promise from the king to provide whatever food she asked for the witch assumed a hideous shape and asked for human flesh. As Jalauka abstained from killing living beings he offered her his own body from which, he said, she could take off whatever flesh she liked. The witch was completely overcome by Jalauka's self-abnegating generosity and regard for living beings. Thereupon she addressed him as a *Bodhisattva* and told him that she had been commissioned by the Buddhists to bring about his death but the *Bodhisattvas* had told her that she could not prevail against the king for he was himself a great *Sakya* (Buddha) and the only thing she should do was to bring home to him the wickedness of his order for the demolition of viharas. On hearing this Jalauka revoked his orders and built a big vihara and placed Krityadevi's

image in it. Kalhana says that by beholding the compassionate ruler the *kritya* was released from her life of sinful darkness and became the goddess Krityadevi.

The Krityashramavihara was in existence till as late as the eleventh century and the versatile Kashmiri writer Kshemendra makes Kankali, the chief heroine of his well-known Sanskrit work *Samayamatrika* spend some time in it in the course of her wanderings through the length and breadth of Kashmir. The Krityashrama has left its name (in a corrupted form) to the village Kitsahom which is situated on the left bank of the Vitasta about five miles below Baramulla. Remains of a Buddhist structure are yet to be found at the small village of Bodhamul near Kitsahom. Bodhamul or Buddhamul is the Buddha's residence on the anology of Varahamul (Baramulla), the residence of Varaha, an incarnation of Vishnu.

Jalauka was followed by another Shaiva ruler Damodara* who was assassinated by some mendicants. There is no mention of any persecution of the Buddhists during Damodara's reign.

The history of Kashmir after Damodara is not certain till we come to the later Kushans. In the interregnum north-western India once again passed under the sway of foreigners, including the Greeks. One of the famous Greek monarchs of the time was Menander, who ruled over a considerable territory with his capital at Sakala or Sialkot. There is no mention of Kashmir having been included in his kingdom. About two years ago a Kashmiri writer said in an article in a

***Damodar-udar* or alluvial plateau containing Kashmir's aerodrome is known after him.

Srinagar newspaper* that Menander's *guru* Nagasena resided at Kishtwar. But when called upon to adduce proof in support of his statement he failed to do so.

Menander, who is believed to have ruled towards the end of the second and in the beginning of the first century B.C. was a great scholar and inquirer after truth. He used to spend his spare time in philosophical discussions with eminent scholars and thinkers of his time. In these he invariably got the better of his adversaries till he came across the Buddhist philosopher Nagasena, at whose hands he was himself converted. Their conversations form the subject matter of the celebrated Sanskrit work *Milinda-Panha* (The Questions of Milinda). The scene of their discussions is laid in a spot "twelve yojanas† from Kashmir." The *Milinda-Panha* contains a graphic account of how Menander's arguments are overcome and his doubts resolved one by one and he seeks refuge in the Buddhist faith and becomes a disciple of the great teacher, who was a thorough-going rationalist.

*The daily *Martand*.

†One *Yojana* is about six miles.

THE KUSHANS

Greek rule in north-western India was followed by that of the Kushans, a sub-division of the Yueh-chi nomads, who hailed from Central Asia. Kashmir which was definitely included in their domain witnessed a great resurgence of Buddhism during their time. This revival began in the reign of Kanishka, the greatest of the Kushan rulers.

Opinions differ about when he ruled. Some writers place his rule in the first century B.C. and others in the first century A.D. There are some others who assign his rule to the second century A.D., but that appears to have been the rule of a successor of his with the same name. Though the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang places his rule in the first century B.C. the more commonly held view now is that he ruled for about a quarter of a century from 78 A.D.

Kanishka's empire extended from Bihar in the east to the borders of Iran in the west. It also included the provinces of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan. These he is believed to have conquered from the Chinese.

Besides being a great conqueror Kanishka is known to have been a liberal patron of arts and letters. His

court was adorned by some of the greatest intellects of the age. Among these were the celebrated Sanskrit poet, dramatist and musician, Ashvaghosha and scholars Parshva, Vasumitra and Sangha-rakhsha. His physician Charaka*—the father of Indian medicine—was a Kashmiri.

Kanishka's extensive empire was rich and prosperous. Kashmir which was at the heart of it, naturally shared in this prosperity; more particularly because the Valley was a favourite resort of the Kushan rulers who detested the heat of Indian plains.

The fourth Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir in Kanishka's time.

The story of Kanishka's conversion to Buddhism is interesting. According to one version he was converted by Ashvaghosha, a Brahman convert from Ayodhya whom he is stated to have got as part of war indemnity at Patliputra. The versatile scholar who had himself embraced Buddhism following defeat in a public discussion with Parshva,was provided with a residence in Kashmir to carry on his literary activities.

Hiuen Tsang's version is altogether different. According to it Kanishka at first treated Buddhism with contumely. One day, however, when he was hunting in a jungle near his capital Purushapura (Peshawar) he saw a white hare which so fascinated him that he set in pursuit of it. After going some distance the hare disappeared. Looking around for it among the trees the Emperor came upon a cowherd boy who was

*Charaka's *Samhita* which deservedly enjoys a high reputation has fortunately come down to us through the labours of another Kashmiri, Dridhabala who revised it. Dridhabala lived in the ninth century A.D.

erecting a three-foot stupa. Asked as to what he was doing the boy related a prophecy according to which the Buddha had told his cousin and disciple, Ananda, that four hundred years after his death a king would erect a stupa over his relics at this place. The cowherd boy further told his questioner that he was the king of the prophecy and he (the boy) was there merely to set in motion the fulfilment of the prophecy. This pleased the king so much that he immediately decided to turn a Buddhist and set about erecting a stupa at the place. The ruins of this magnificent stupa, over 600 ft. in height, were in existence till the coming of the Muslims, and the celebrated Muslim scholar Abu Raihan Al-Beruni who accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni on his conquering expeditions into India, refers to it as *Kanik-chaitya.*

Following his conversion to Buddhism, Kanishka ardently studied the Buddhist scriptures. Every day a monk was invited to the palace to instruct the Emperor in the teachings of the faith. But as the monks gave him different interpretations which were often at variance with one another, he was very much confused. He explained his difficulty to Parshva, a learned Brahman from Mathura who had also embraced Buddhism. The venerable teacher explained to him how the different interpretations had arisen on account of the growth of a number of sects after the death of the Buddha. The king therefore decided to convoke an assembly of the leading monks, on the lines of the one held by Ashoka, with a view to reconciling their views and restoring Buddhism to its former glory. Parshva welcomed the proposal and invitations were issued to the holy and the wise all over the realm.

Large numbers of monks and learned men from all directions responded to the royal invitation. After they had been entertained for seven days, four hundred and ninetynine of them were carefully selected to sit in conference to arrange the scriptures and to write an authoritative commentary on them.

Kanishka wanted them to meet and deliberate somewhere in Gandhara but the place was objected to on account of its 'heat and dampness'. Then he suggested Rajagriha where a similar Council had been held previously. But the place was rejected on the advice of the principal monks for it was contended that the presence of large numbers of heretical teachers there was likely to lead to unnecessary controversy and useless discussion. Finally on the suggestion of Parshva and with the approval of the other assembled monks it was decided to hold the Council in Kashmir where it was pointed out 'the land is guarded on every side by mountains, the soil is rich and productive and it is well provided with food'. The king himself accompanied the selected monks to the Happy Valley where he founded a monastery for them.

According to the Chinese pilgrim only *arhats** were admitted the Council. The admission of Vasumitra—a venerable monk who originally came from Central India—gave rise to some controversy. For it was contended that he was not an *arhat*. But soon after when they all came to know of his great merit and spiritual

*An *arhat* is a disciple who works for and attains *nirvana* for himself alone. A *bodhisattva* on the other hand is one who having attained enlightenment works for the enlightenment and deliverance of his fellow beings. *Bodhisattva* is essentially a Mahayanist conception.

powers, he was not only admitted but made the President of the Council. Hiuen Tsang adds that all difficulties that occurred in the discussions were referred to him for settlement. Writers other than Hiuen Tsang include *bodhisattvas* and *pandits* also among those who participated in the Council.

The Council which sat for six months, collected all available sayings and teachings of the Buddha and the other masters of the Law and drew up expository commentaries on the *Sutra** (sermons), the *Vinaya* (discipline) and the *Abhidharma* (metaphysics). The commentaries relating to the originals of the texts were called *Upadeshashastras* and those discussing their various interpretations were called *Vibhashashastras.* Hiuen Tsang records that Kanishka had them engraven on copper plates. These were placed in a stone receptacle over which was erected a stupa.

The Buddhist Council held in Kashmir is an event of great significance in the history of Buddhism and besides Hiuen Tsang other writers also have written about it. According to Taranatha, Kanishka went to Kashmir to listen to the teachings of its former ruler Simha† who had renounced the throne and become a monk. Parshva was also in Kashmir at that time and it was on his advice that he decided to hold the Council. The Tibetan historian adds that the Council was attended by five hundred *arhats*, five hundred *bodhisattvas* and five hundred *pandits.* It attempted to bring about a reconciliation between the views of the different sects

*The *Sutra*, the *Vinaya* and the *Abhidharma* constitute the *Tripitaka* or Three Baskets of Buddhist scriptural writings.

†Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* mentions no ruler of the name of Simha or Sudarshana as he is stated to have styled himself after ordination.

and settle once again the *Sutra*, the *Vinaya* and the *Abhidharma* texts.

In his life of Vasubandhu, the Indian Buddhist scholar, Paramartha has also referred to the Buddhist Council held in Kashmir. According to him it was held under the presidency of Katyayaniputra* who with the help of five hundred *arhats* and five hundred *bodhisattvas* arranged the Sarvastivadin *Abhidharma* texts into eight sections and drew up a commentary on the same. Ashvaghosha was sent for specially to put the commentary, *Vibhasha*, into proper literary form.

The *Vibhasha* is so closely associated with Kashmir that the masters who composed it are sometimes referred to as *Kashmirshi* in Chinese. Kanishka held Kashmir in high esteem. Hiuen Tsang records that when at the conclusion of the pious labours of the Council, the King along with his army, left the Valley by the western gate, "he turned towards the east and fell on his knees, and again bestowed all this kingdom on the priesthood."

The copper plates on which are engraven the fruits of the labours of the Buddhist Council have not been found so far. In 1882 extensive excavations were carried out at Ushkar near Baramulla in the hope of locating them. A stupa of squared stones, held together with iron clamps was unearthed, but the sought for treasure was not there.

The *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana has nothing to say about the Buddhist Council or Kanishka I in whose reign it was held. The Kashmir historian

*According to Hiuen Tsang Katyayana composed the *Fo-chi-lun* (*Abhidharmajnana-prasthana-shastra*) in Tamasavanavihara near Jullundur three hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvana*.

places the rule of Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka, immediately after that of Damodara who was assassinated by some mendicants. He describes them as Turushka or Turkish kings (in view of their dynastic origin in Turkistan) but does not indicate how they came to possess the Kashmir throne. As already pointed out, the history of Kashmir following Damodara is vague and uncertain for some time. That possibly explains Kalhana's omission and also his lumping together the three Turushka rulers as ruling at one and the same time. But he also refers to the flourishing condition of Buddhism during their reign.

Kalhana records that Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka built in Shuskaletra (Hukhalitar) and other places, monasteries, chaityas and similar edifices. He specifically mentions the founding of four cities by them. One of these, Jayasvamipora, built by Jushka has not been identified so far. The other three, known after their founders' names as Hushkapura, Jushkapura and Kanishkapura correspond to the present-day villages of Ushkar, Zukur and Kanispor respectively. While Ushkar and Kanispor are in the vicinity of Baramulla, Zukur is situated to the north of Srinagar at a short distance from Nasim Bagh on the Dal Lake.

The Kashmir historian adds that during the glorious period of their regime the kingdom of Kashmir was for the most part an appanage of the Buddhists who had acquired lustre by renunciation. Not merely that. Kushan rulers had given the Buddhist monks a master hand in the administration of the territory. According to Hiuen Tsang, Kanishka made a gift of Kashmir to the Buddhist sangha. Kalhana describes the illustrious Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna who lived in

Kashmir in the time of the Kushans as "the sole supreme ruler of the land."

Writers of Indian history are not decided about whether the great Buddhist Council was held in the time of Kanishka I or in the time of one of his successors of the same name. But as Kalhana does not mention it at all in his *Rajatarangini* it must have been held in the time of Kanishka I who preceded Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka mentioned by him. It was in his time and by reason of this Council that Kashmir became a great centre of Buddhist learning. For it was then that the Valley was visited by many eminent Buddhist savants and scholars some of whom made this paradisial land their abode for long.

One such scholar living in Kashmir during the time of Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka and their successor Abhimanyu was Nagarjuna. Nagarjuna, who by many is regarded as the greatest Buddhist philosopher dwelt at Shadarhadvana. Shadarhadvana which in Sanskrit means 'the grove of six *arhats*' corresponds to the existing village of Harwan, situated about two miles from the well-known Shalamar garden on the Dal Lake. The old name of the place unmistakably shows that it had come to be known as such following the residence there of six Buddhist luminaries. These may have been the leading *arhats* like Vasumitra, Parshva and Ashvaghosha who participated in Kanishka's Council.

In fact the Council itself might have been held at Harwan. This view finds support from the results of the excavations carried out at the place some years back. The eminent Kashmiri archaeologist Ram Chandra Kak who was responsible for these excavations has given a detailed description* of the same. The structures

*In his book *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*.



Tile-covered floor and wall of a Buddhist structure at Harwan.

unearthed on the hill-side are (1) the triple base of a medium sized stupa* in a rectangular court-yard (2) a set of rooms which might have been used as chapels or for residential purposes, and a little further up the hillside (3) a large chaitya, built in picturesque daiper-pebble style of masonry. The chaitya comprised a spacious rectangular ante-chamber and a circular sanctum behind it. According to Kak the whole hillside in the time to which the ruins belong was arranged in level terraces, on each of which stood several buildings. These obviously must have housed the monks who participated in the Council.

Some people are disposed to regard Kanispor or Kanishkapura as the place where the Council was held. But if that were so Kalhana would perhaps not have failed to make a mention of it. The view—held among others by Dr. Radhakrishnan§—that the Council was held at Jalandhara or Jullundur is disproved by Hiuen Tsang's description. Jullundur would obviously not have been selected when Gandhara was rejected on account of its "heat and dampness". Dr. Bagchi's view† that the Council was held at Purushapura or Peshawar is also not tenable. For Peshawar had not much to commend itself as the venue of the Council when Jalandhara was rejected on account of its "heat and dampness". For Hiuen Tsang describes the

*Among interesting finds at Harwan are some clay tablets, bearing in relief miniature stupas. These, like the ruins of the stupa unearthed there, have a triple-base, with a central flight of steps. The basement is surmounted with a cylindrical dome from the hemispherical top of which rise a number of poles bearing a large number of umbrellas. These diminish in size until they end in a pointed finial, with a number of streamers.

§Vide: his *Indian Philospby Vol.* I page 584.

†Vide: his *India and Central Asia* page 32.

climate of both the places as "warm and moist". Also neither place was mountain-girt—at any rate in the way that Kashmir is. Otherwise also the Chinese pilgrim has left little scope for doubt in the matter. He mentions Kashmir as the venue of the Council not only in his description of Kashmir but also in that of Gandhara including Po-lu-sha-pu-lo (Purushapura or Peshawar) and Salatura. His disciple Hwui Li who wrote an account of his life, Taranatha and Paramartha also say that the Council was held in Kashmir. Further it would be absurd to suggest that Kanishka made a gift of Peshawar, his capital, to the Sangha.

CHAPTER VI

POST KUSHAN REACTION

Buddhism enjoyed considerable vogue in Kashmir in the beginning of Abhimanyu's reign which, in Kalhana's *Chronicle*, comes after that of the Turushka kings, Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka. The celebrated Nagarjuna lived in Kashmir in his time also. We have it on the authority of Kalhana that under Nagarjūna's guidance the Buddhists defeated in disputation all learned Brahmans in the land. The result was that traditional rites and customs fell into disuse.

This development was naturally not to the liking of the Brahman clergy and the Nagas. But they were helpless. It was an age of free thinking and there was full freedom for the people to follow whatever faith they liked. People could not be coerced into following practices in which they had lost faith.

But Nature helped the Brahmans and the Nagas to recover their lost prestige. Kashmir at that time witnessed severe winter for a number of years in succession. There were excessive snowfalls in which large numbers of Buddhists—perhaps the ones who had come from outside and settled in the Valley—died. This occurrence came in handy to the Nagas and the Brahman clergy. They said—perhaps from sincere belief—that the

excessive snowfalls had been brought about by the Naga gods, who had been displeased by the stoppage of the customary offerings to them. A leading Brahman, Chandradeva interpreted the excessive snowfalls and the death of large numbers of Buddhists as a punishment by the Naga deities for the abandoning of the traditional rites and customs by the people.

The people were terror-stricken by the extreme severity of the winters. So severe were they in fact that even the king was obliged to reside* for about six months in the cold season in the warmer Darvabhisara—Bimbhar-Rajouri area to the south-west of Kashmir. The arguments of the Brahman and the Nagas, therefore, easily went home. Chandradeva and others practised austerities† to please *Nilanaga*—the tutelary deity of the Valley—and when the affliction of excessive snowfalls came to an end, it was ascribed by them to the gracious intervention of Nila.

This was a signal victory for the Brahmans and on the instructions of the king, Chandradeva spread once again the knowledge of *Mahabhashya* (of Patanjali) and other works which had become rare in Kashmir.

While it is recorded that large numbers of Buddhists died in the severe winters in the time of Abhimanyu, it also appears certain that many must have left the

*This practice of the king and the courtiers going to warmer regions in winter was revived by the Dogra rulers of Kashmir and continues to this day. Nowadays also the *Sadr-e-Riyasat*, members of the Kashmir Cabinet and the principal offices of the State Government move down to Jammu for winter months.

†Now-a-days also whenever Kashmir is visited by continued drought, earthquakes or epidemics people of different faiths offer prayers and perform other ceremonies to invoke Divine intervention to end them.

land after the severity of the first such winter. Among these must have been a number of great Buddhist monks like Nagarjuna. In fact one factor responsible for the success of the Brahmans and the Nagas in reviving the ancient rites and practices must have been the absence of Buddhist *acharyas* like Nagarjuna who had either left the land or perished on account of the excessive snowfalls.

Unfortunately not much is known about Nagarjuna's life. The little that is known is also confusing as there have been two or three scholars of that name, living at different times. Nagarjuna* referred to above is generally believed, on the basis of Hieun Tsang's record, to have been born in a Brahman family in Berar. But according to Kumarajiva's biography of the great philosopher, he came of a Brahman family of South India. It is, however, certain that Nagarjuna who propounded the Madhyamika system of Buddhist philosophy, lived in Kashmir for a number of years and commanded great respect and influence. Nagarjuna's philosophy commonly known as *Shunyevada* rejects both the theory of reality and non-reality of the world and shows that Reality or *Shunyata* (Voidness) as he calls it,

*In the *Gods of Northern Buddhism* A. Getty relates an interesting Tibetan legend about Nagarjuna. According to this legend it was predicted at the time of his birth that he would live for only seven days. But "in consideration of the acts of merit performed by his parents, the gods delayed his death until seven weeks, then to seven months, and finally to seven years. Before the seven years were up, he was sent to the convent of Nalanda, where he learnt to adore Amitayus, god of long life, and succeeded in so propitiating the god that he is said to have lived 300 years on earth, ending his life only by cutting off his own head." In his *Kathasaritsagara*, the Kashmiri writer Somadeva gives an interesting story about the cutting off of his head by Nagarjuna.

is transcendant over both existence and non-existence. He is said to have received the *Mahayana-sutra* from a very old monk in the Himalayas. According to another version Nagarjuna studied the Buddhist sacred texts with Ashvagosha—possibly in Kashmir.

Nagarjuna is also known to have resided in Andhra in South India. The place– on the south bank of the Krishna river in Guntur District– where he resided was in his time known as Sri Parvata. Later it came to be known as Vijayapuri and Nagarjunakonda* or Hill of Nagarjuna. Most probably Nagarjuna had settled down there after his long sojourn in Kashmir. This view receives support from the fact that many Buddhist monks from Kashmir used to go to Sri Parvata where this master dialectician had taken up his residence during the reign of the Satavahana ruler Hala. The Ikshvakus who overthrew the Satavahanas in this part of their territory early in the third century A.D. were devout Hindus. But their queens seem to have been Buddhists; at any rate some of them patronized the faith. One of these, Shanti Shri is known to have erected a number of chaityas and viharas at the place. Another *upasini* (devotee) Bodhi Shri built *chaityagrihas* for Buddhists coming from different countries including Kashmir.

Buddhism entered its second period of decline in Kashmir in the time of Abhimanyu. The traditional mode of worship, including the practice of making sacrificial offerings, etc., which was revived in

*The locality will be submerged when the giant Nagarjunasagar project, now under construction , is completed. But the Buddhist relics, etc., found there will be preserved in a museum either on the hill-top or elsewhere. .

Abhimanyu's time was completely re-established in the time of his successor, Gonanda.

Very little is known about the condition of Buddhism or, for the matter of that, of anything else during the time of the next four rulers. But in the time of Nara or Kinnara who came after them, Buddhism in Kashmir suffered a major catastrophe.

Nara or Kinnara who has left his name to village Narapura on the Vitasta a little below Bijbihara ruled well in the beginning of his forty years' rule. Later on, however, he developed lecherous propensities and became a great nuisance to his subjects. In revenge for his debauchery, as it were, a Buddhist monk carried away his sweetheart or wife. This set the king aflame against the Buddhists and he destroyed a large number of viharas. His wrath against the Buddhists did not end with this only; he had the lands attached to the viharas occupied by Brahmans.

But this lustful king did not spare the Brahmans either. Kalhana records how his attempts to seduce the chaste wife of a pious Brahman ultimately led to his doom. He was so relentless in the pursuit of his evil objective that the harassed couple could save its honour through suicide only. This enraged the Naga father of the beautiful lady so much that he destroyed the wicked king along with the well-laid out town Narapura which he had built.

Fortunately Nara's son Siddha was not in town at the time of the catastrophe and was thus saved to heal the wounds which his ill-charactered father had inflicted on his subjects.

Siddha who was a devout Shaiva lived an unblemished life. So good was he that tradition credits

him with a bodily ascent to heaven, after a rule of sixty years during which, according to Kalhana, he put 'new life in the remnant of the population.'

After Siddha, Kashmir was for long under Shaivite rulers. Though there is no mention of any persecution of the Buddhists during their time, yet it cannot be gain said that the faith must have suffered somewhat in prestige or following as a result of its being bereft of royal patronage, which it had enjoyed in such rich measure in the time of Ashoka and the Kushans. Brahmans, on the contrary, gained a lot both in influence and wealth. One ruler of the period who prominently stands out for his patronage of Shaivism and the Brahmans was Gopaditya who built a new temple, Jyestheshvara, on the Shankaracharya hill in Srinagar. Earlier a Shiva shrine known as Jyestharudra had been founded here by Ashoka's son and successor, Jalauka.

Gopaditya's patronage lured to Kashmir a large number of Brahmans from the plains and he granted them *agraharas**at the foot of the hill, then known as Gopadari.

The dynasty which ruled Kashmir after the Kushans was founded by Gonanda during whose reign 'the traditional mode of worship was completely re-established in the Valley. The dynasty's rule came to an end with Yudhisthira who, through his own imprudence, was deposed by his ministers to make way for a foreigner.

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*These *agraharas* came to be known, after him, as *Gopa agraharas* from which is derived the present name of the locality Gupkar. This picturesque site, commanding an exquisite view of the Dal Lake, was chosen by the Dogra ruler, Hari Singh, for the construction of his magnificent palace and allied buildings. The palace buildings now house a de luxe tourist hotel.

Kashmir under the Guptas

The new ruler Pratapaditya who was brought in to rule over Kashmir was a scion of the Gupta dynasty which was ruling northern India at that time. Both Pratapaditya and his son Jalaukas are stated to have ruled well. Nothing is known about their religious affiliations though it is certain that under their just rule there was no persecution of anybody on account of his creed or faith. In keeping with the time honoured tradition of the Valley all people enjoyed the fullest liberty to pursue the faith of their choice. This was the case also in the time of Jalaukas' successor Tunjina who was a devout Shaiva.

According to Kalhana, Tunjina and his pious wife Vakpushta sustained the land nobly with its various castes. Tunjina's reign is, however, remembered for a terrible famine which befell Kashmir in it. The famine was caused by an early fall of snow (as early as the beginning of September), in which the ripening rice crop was completely destroyed. The benign king, his noble consort and the benevolent ministers spared no pains to save the people. In addition to the State treasure they used their personal treasures also to provide relief to the people.

Tunjina's death brought to the throne of Kashmir Vijaya of a different dynasty. No clue is available as to why a change of dynasty occurred in Kashmir again on the death of Tunjina. Perhaps Tunjina died childless. This may have provided an opportunity to a scion of some former dynasty to stage a come-back. Or the new ruler may have been connected in some way to the Huns who about this time had become very active in north-western India.

Vijaya who built a town around the ancient shrine of Vijayeshvara was succeeded by his son Jayendra. A prophecy that Jayendra would be succeeded by his wise minister Sandhiman or Samdhimati set him against the latter. The innocent minister was thrown into prison and when the king felt that he was nearing his end, he issued orders for the minister's impalement. These orders fortunately were not carried out. The much wronged minister who on account of his unblemished record enjoyed the love and respect of the people was saved by his *guru*, Ishana, an don Jayendra's death shortly after, he was installed on the throne.

On accession to the throne Samdhimati was named Aryaraja. A devout Shaiva, he was known for his piety. He built some Shiva temples at Ishabar near Nishat Bagh. He ruled well but as most of his time was spent in visiting various shrines and in worship the people became disaffected.

Samdhimati had never been keen to accept the throne. He had reluctantly accepted it on the entreaties of the people and at the behest of his *guru*. As soon, therefore, as he came to know of the people's disaffection, he decided to renounce the throne. He immediately convened a meeting of the people in which he announced his abdication. The people were taken aback at his decision and begged of him to continue but his decision was unalterable. He left the capital and went to the sacred shrine of Shiva Bhutesha at the foot of the holy Haramukh* where he ended his days as a recluse.

*Haramukh is a mountain to the north of the Valley and is about 17,000 feet high.

Kashmir under the Huns

A reference has already been made to the growing activity of the Huns—a nomadic people from Central Asian steppes who overran western Asia and north-western India in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. The Huns seem to have established themselves firmly in Afghanistan and northern India towards the end of Jayendra's rule. The sagacious Toramana who was responsible for the consolidation of the Hun power was succeeded by his son Mihirakula about 515 A.D. Mihirakula's sway extended over Kashmir also.

Mihirakula is notorious for his wickedness and cruelty. Kalhana who places him about twelve hundred years before his time describes him as the enemy of mankind, with no pity for children, compassion for women or respect for the aged.

The Kashmir historian relates two incidents to show how cruel he was to man and beast alike. On one occasion he had a number of innocent elephants hurled down a Pir Panchal slope because the shrieks of one elephant who accidentally slipped and rolled down pleased him. On another occasion women were the objects of his fury. This was aroused on his discovery, in a novel way, that they were not chaste.

Kalhana says that the king was greatly worried when the diversion of a river was held up on account of a huge immovable rock in its proposed course. One night he dreamt that the rock would move on being touched by a woman of chaste character. Next morning he called upon the people of high families to send their women to touch the rock block. They came and touched it but to no avail. After large numbers of them had failed to help move the rock—which for them

proved to be the rock of death—it finally yielded at the touch of a potter's wife. Enraged at this curious proof of the nonchastity of the women of high families, he had them slaughtered along with their husbands, sons and brothers. For cruelties such as these, Kalhana records, Mihirakula was called *trikotihantr*—killer of three crores.

Hiuen Tsang represents Mihirakula as a great persecutor of Buddhists. But he was not so always. The Chinese pilgrim has an interesting story to tell about his savage hostility to them.

Mihirakula was a bold intrepid man of great ability. He had his capital at Sakala or Sialkot and his overlordship was acknowledged by all the neighbouring States. Inspired perhaps by the example of his great Buddhist predecessors like Menandar and Kanishka, Mihirakula also wanted to devote his leisure time to the study of Buddhism. He therefore ordered the Buddhist clergy to suggest a capable monk to be his teacher. The outstanding monks of the day declined this high honour as they were afraid of the king's stern nature; others declined it for fear of being found out as possessing little merit or knowledge. Ultimately their choice fell upon one who had been a servant in the king's household. Mihirakula took this as a great insult and he ordered the utter extermination of the Sangha throughout the country.

This harsh command evoked opposition from Baladitya, the ruler of Magadha at that time. When Mihirakula heard of it he decided to invade the territory of his opponent, who was a zealous Buddhist. He raised an army and proceeded against Baladitya. The

latter knowing the prowess of his adversary, fled his kingdom and hid himself in some eastern islands. When Mihirakula came to know of this he left his army in the charge of his younger brother and himself set in further pursuit of the enemy. But he was not gone far when he was taken prisoner by Baladitya's followers. He would have been put to death if Baladitya's mother had not intervened in his behalf and presuaded her son to let him go. Baladitya therefore 'gave him in marriage to a young maiden'* and permitted him to return home with an escort.

On arrival at Sakala, Mihirakula found that his throne had been usurped by his younger brother. He therefore took refuge in Kashmir where according to the Chinese pilgrim, the ruler, out of pity granted him a small appanage. Mihirakula, however, did not prove himself worthy of this kind treatment. The ungrateful wretch, Hiuen Tsang adds, stirred up a rebellion against his benefactor and ascended the throne after killing him. Next he invaded Gandhara, exterminated the royal family, destroyed hundreds of stupas and sangharamas and put to death large numbers of innocent Buddhists.

Mihirakula's defeat in India is now generally ascribed to the combined efforts of Baladitya-Narasimhagupta (485 to 530 A.D.) and his contemporary Yashodharman of Mandasor.

It has been noted above—on the basis Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*—that Aryaraja renounced the Kashmir throne on account of the disaffection among his subjects. Hiuen Tsang, however, says that Mihirakula usurped

*Beal's *Records of the Western World.*

the Kashmir throne after killing its rightful occupant. But he also attests that Mihirakula had stirred up the ruler's subjects to rebellion before installing himself on the throne in his stead. It thus appears that Mihirakula occupied the Kashmir throne after Aryaraja's abdication.

Of course there is, in the above view, the difficulty of reconciling the dates for Mihirakula's rule as given by the Kashmir historian, the Chinese pilgrim and the modern scholars. But then we know that Kalhana's chronology about the early rulers of Kashmir is not very reliable. As has already been observed he places Mihirakula about twelve hundred years before his time. Hiuen Tsang also assigns him dates much earlier than those now recognised on the basis of recent historical research.

While the Chinese pilgrim states that Buddhists alone were the victims of Mihirakula's wrath and cruelty, Kalhana observes no such distinctions in his conduct. The Kashmir historian, however, clearly mentions Mihirakula's patronage of Brahmans with whose help he tried to reconvert the people to the old faith.

Though after Kinnara Kashmir was mostly under Shaivite rulers, yet it is known, on the basis of Kalhana's record, that Buddhism was subject to no disability or discrimination. In fact it was during this time that Kashmir achieved high renown as a centre of Buddhist learning to which aspiring scholars came from far and near. Buddhism appears to have become very popular among the laity once again. This is borne out by Kalhana's observation that 'when overrun by the

impious Dards, Bhauttas and *Mlecchas* this country had lost religion he (Mihirakula) had promulgated the observance of religious conduct by settling the people from the land of the Aryas'. These settlers from outside were granted a thousand agraharas. The local Brahmans, it appears, did not cooperate with this 'foul-minded' king and refused to accept favours from him. Kalhana's undisguised contempt for Mihirakula is displayed again and again in his narrative. When referring to his death on account of several diseases he calls him 'this *Bhairava* on earth'.

CHAPTER VII

MEGHAVAHANA

On Mihirakula's death the Kashmir throne was fortunately occupied once again by a staunch Buddhist. He was Meghavahana. The new ruler whom Kalhana places after Aryaraja belonged to an old ruling dynasty of Kashmir. His father was a descendant of Yudhishthira who, we have seen, was deposed to make way for Pratapaditya.

Meghavahana who was living in exile at the Gandhara court when the Kashmir throne fell vacant was approached by the Kashmiri ministers to occupy it. This he willingly did.

Meghavahana's zeal for Buddhism is indicated by the fact that at the very time of his coronation he issued a proclamation prohibiting the slaughter of animals—even in sacrifices—throughout the realm. The prohibition was later extended to the killing of birds and fishes also. In fact he was so keen about the practice of non-violence that he is represented as having undertaken a *digvijaya* to impose his prohibition of slaughter on all. In the course of this 'conquest of earth' he is shown by Kalhana as having subdued King Vibishana

of Ceylon but no independent evidence is forthcoming to substantiate this claim.

Meghavahana's solicitude for the welfare of his subjects is deserving of the highest praise. He realised that his prohibition of killing would mean great hardship to butchers, fishermen and others who would thus be thrown out of employment. The kind-hearted ruler, therefore, gave them generous monetary assistance to set themselves up in other professions or business.

His regard for the religious susceptibilities of his people was equally great. At his suggestion, therefore, effigies of animals made of paste, butter, etc., were offered at sacrifices in place of animals by those who believed in such practices. Not only that. Once he was approached by a Brahman whose only son was about to die of some ailment. The Brahman placed the responsibility for the approaching death of his dear child on the king, whose prohibitory orders prevented him from offering an animal sacrifice which, according to him, would save his dying son. The king thereupon decided to offer himself as a sacrifice if the child did not recover soon. Fortunately the child was miraculoulsy restored to health before the king's decision was carried out. On another occasion when Meghavahana was on a conquering expedition abroad his intervention is stated to have saved an unfortunate waif who was about to be sacrificed by a superstitious *Kirata* (Bhil).

Meghavahana founded a city, created an *agrahara* and built a convent known after his name. He also built a number of viharas. Meghavahana's zeal for Buddhist foundations becomes well understood if he is

placed after Mihirakula. The king's wives—he had about half a dozen—vied with him in his enthusiasm for the erection of religious buildings. The chief among them, Amritaprabha built a lofty vihara for the use of *bhikshus* (monks) from the plains. The vihara known after her as *Amritabhavana* has left its name to the small village Antabhavan (near Vicharnag) about three miles to the north of Srinagar. The great antiquary Sir Aurel Stein has recorded that in June 1895, he found in the vicinity of the village of Vicharnag the remains of 'what appears to have been once a vihara'. He adds, "A solid mound constructed of stone and concrete which rises in the centre of the site and is still in its ruined state over 20 feet high, can scarcely be anything but a stupa. Around it can be traced the foundations of a great quadrangular building marked by large carved slabs *in situ*. The base of a staircase leading to the stupa mound can also be distinguished. About 30 yards to the east lies a tank-like depression which has retained parts of a massive enclosing wall of great antiquity". Stones from here, he was told, were used in the construction of many temples and other buildings towards the close of the nineteenth century.

Amritaprabha was a princess of Assam. Her *guru* who hailed from Lo* (Leh) founded a stupa. Another queen Yukadevi built a vihara 'of wonderful appearance' at Nadavana (Narvor) in the northern part of Srinagar. Bachelors and married *bhikshus* both were accommodated in it. Other queens also got built

*Dr. Stein equates Lo with Leh, administrative headquarters of Ladakh district . R.S. Pandit, another well-known translator of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, equates it with South Tibet.

viharas which were known after them. One of them, Indradevi built a stupa also. Her vihara was known *Indradevibhavana.* Its location is not known but the site of the monastery built by the queen Khadana has been located at Khadaniyar, about four miles below Baramulla on the right bank of the Jhelum.

With Meghavahana's death Buddhism in Kashmir was once again bereft of royal patronage. But there is no record anywhere of any persecution of its followers or of any discrimination towards them in the time of his successors. In fact, a number of Buddhist sacred buildings were put up in their time. There is mention of the erection of a big vihara in the time of Pravarasena II who ruled towards the later part of the sixth century A.D. The vihara was built by the illustrious king's maternal uncle Jayendra and was known after him as the *Jayendravihara.* Hiuen Tsang put up in this vihara during his stay in Kashmir. The exact location of the vihara has not been so far determined but it appears to have been situated somewhere near the present-day *Jama Masjid* of Srinagar. Sir Walter Lawrence records* that according to some people the ground on which the mosque stands was sacred to the Buddhists. In his time also Buddhists from Ladakh visited the mosque and spoke of it by its old name, Tsitsung Tsublak Kang.

Pravarasena's minister Moroka built a convent known after himself. Kalhana calls it the 'world famous *Morokabhavana.*' This also appears to have been a Buddhist building on the analogy of other such buildings like Narendrabhavana, Amritabhavana, etc.

*In his *The Valley of Kashmir.*

Pravarasena was himself a great builder. He founded a new town, Pravarapura, to which he transferred his capital from Shrinagari founded by Ashoka. In the new town which lay between the right bank of the Vitasta and the foot of the Hari Parbat hill, he erected a number of palatial buildings and temples. The massive ruins of some of these can be seen to this day outside the high wall which surrounds the hill on its south-west. Jayendra's vihara and Moroka's *bhavana* were in this town.

Buddhist buildings continued to be erected in the time of Pravarasena's successors. As in Paravarasena's time the faith was professed by men in high places even. Among these may be mentioned Vajrendra and Skanda, ministers of Yudhishthira, son and successor of Pravarasena. Vajrendra who was the son of Jayendra built a number of chaityas and viharas. Skanda founded an imposing vihara—known after him as the *Skandabhavanavihara*—which has left its name Khandabhavan to a locality in Srinagar. This locality is in the north of the city between Nau Kadal (6th Bridge) and *I'd Gah.* Stein claims that he was able to trace the site of Skanda's vihara in the close vicinity of the *ziarat* of Pir Mohammed Basur.

Yudhishthira was followed by Narindraditya-Lakhana. His son Ranaditya is credited by Kalhana with an incredible rule of three hundred years. One of Ranaditya's queens was a patron of Buddhism. She placed an image in the vihara built by Bimba, a queen of Meghavahana. A convent and a vihara were built by the ministers, Brahma and Galuna in the time of Ranaditya's son, Vikramaditya.

Vikramaditya's son and successor Baladitya was the last ruler of the Gonanda dynasty. From him the rule of Kashmir passed to the Karkota dynasty.

Baladitya had been foretold that he would be succeeded by his son-in-law. To prevent this happening, he married his daughter Anangalekha to a petty official named Durlabhavardhana. The latter, through his judicious conduct and forbearance soon won the favour of his father-in-law and his chief minister, and when Baladitya passed away, he was installed on the throne. Baladitya's son had predeceased him.

SANSKRIT BUDDHISM AND KASHMIR

Kanishka's Council gave a powerful fillip to the growth of Buddhist learning in Kashmir. This Council is now regarded as the fourth great Buddhist Council; three others having been held earlier.

The first of these held at Rajagriha shortly after the death of the Buddha drew up the *Tripitaka*—the three Baskets of the Sacred Canon. The second Council was held at Vaishali a hundred years after the first. It was called because a section of the Sangha felt the rules of discipline to be too strict and wanted a relaxation of some of them. The Council's decision was in favour of the no-changers. The progressives therefore broke away from the main body of the Sangha. In course of time they came to be known as the Mahasanghikas (probably they called their organisation as the Mahasanghà) in contra-distinction to the conservatives who came to be known as the Sthaviras or Theravadins.

Doubts have been expressed about the authenticity of these two Councils. But there can be no doubt that a schism occurred in the Sangha within about a hundred years of the death of its founder. The two

great sub-divisions got further sub-divided with the passage of time and it is on record that while the Theravadins split into eleven smaller sub-sects the Mahasanghikas broke up into seven.

Ashoka's Council—now regarded as the third great Buddhist Council—was called to smoothen out the differences between the Theravadins and their main subsect, the Sarvastivadins who had made Kashmir and Gandhara their home. According to Hiuen Tsang the Emperor was so exasperated by the division in the ranks of the monks that he intended to drown them all in the Ganga when they assembled at Patliputra for the Council. But the Chinese pilgrim seems to have been completely misinformed about the intentions of Ashoka. It is unthinkable that that apostle of amity and *ahimsa* would ever have entertained such base intentions which were so completely at variance with his teachings and practice. It is, however, said that a minister of his, misunderstanding his intentions, beheaded some monks when they refused to carry out the Emperor's orders to observe a certain ceremony at which all the monks used to assemble and declare their acts of omission and commission. May be this was the reason why the Sarvastivadins living in Kashmir did not participate in the Council in spite of repeated appeals to them to do so by the Emperor. Later, as Hiuen Tsang himself records, Ashoka built five hundred sangharamas for them in the Valley.

Many people are disposed to regard the division in the Sangha as an unfortunate development. This it no doubt was. But there was nothing extraordinary about it. The break-up of the Brotherhood was almost

inevitable, once the unifying towering personality of the Master was removed.

Unlike the Semitic faiths, the great Indian faiths have, generally speaking, not been marred by any exclusivism of their doctrines, at any rate in their earlier stages. And of the Indian faiths themselves Buddhism was perhaps the most eclectic. A short while before his death the Buddha was asked as to what instructions he had for the Sangha. His reply was: "Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Rely on yourselves, and do not rely on any external help. Hold fast to truth as a lamp. Seek salvation in the truth alone."

Unlike some other religious teachers the Buddha did not seek acceptance of his views merely because he had propounded them. His was but a way—the Golden Middle Way—to salvation. But the people were asked to rely principally on themselves, to be lamps unto themselves. They were to follow his way only if they felt convinced of its rightness. There was no compulsion, no coercion. The Buddha did not even claim to be the leader of the Sangha ; nor did he think that it was dependent on him.

The Sangha was essentially democratic and difference of opinion is a postulate of democracy. Differences of opinion among members of the Brotherhood are known to have existed in the life-time of the Buddha himself. On one occasion they became so acute that the monks came to blows almost. Thereupon the Tathagata related to them the story of prince Dirghayu of Koshala who had won for himself his ancestral kingdom and the daughter of his parents' assassin Brahmadatta, King of Kashi, by sparing the life of the usurper when he lay helpless in his hands in the loneliness of a forest. The

prince who had at first thought of killing his enemy later let him go unscathed because he suddenly remembered his father's last advice that hatred is not overcome by hatred but through love.

The Buddhist monks were divided into about a dozen and half sects when Kanishka came to power. His Council, a detailed description of which has been given earlier, was held to bring about a reconciliation between the views of these sects. Unlike the Ashokan Council which was attended by Theravadins only, this Council was attended by members of many more sects. The Sarvastivadins, however, predominated.

Kanishka's Council is an important landmark in the history of Buddhism. It respresents the rise of what may be called Sanskrit Buddhism. From now onwards Sanskrit became the language of Buddhist thought and discussion all over the north. As has already been noticed, the canonical texts and the commentaries on them drawnup at the Council were in Sanskrit. These were written or compiled by eminent Sanskrit scholars like Ashvaghosha and Parshva. Inevitably all subsequent discussion on them was also in Sanskrit.

The emergence of Sanskrit as the language of Buddhism had far reaching consequences. It meant the domination of the faith by those who had mastery over the language, or, in other words, the Brahman converts. Unconsciously and imperceptibly the Hindu theistic concepts began to creep into Buddhism. For though ardent Buddhists, the Brahman converts could not divest themselves entirely of their polytheistic background. The result was that before long Buddhism also developed a sacred pantheon like some of the Hindu sects.

The traditional gods of the Hindus were fitted into a new system, where separate places and functions were assigned to them. The Buddha ceased to be a dead teacher and was deified as a living god. He came to be looked upon as a Saviour and as but one of the incarnations of the Adi-Buddha, the Primeval Buddha. Gods like Avalokiteshvara and Manjushri were created to personify the great Buddhist virtues of compassion and wisdom. The ideal of arhat, the perfected disciple who attains Buddhahood and deliverance for himself only gave way to that of bodhisattva—one who having attained enlightenment postpones his own deliverance in order to help others to attain the same. Unlike the more orthodox view which regarded Buddhahood as something to be acquired by strict discipline and piety, the progressive view was that Buddhahood already lay within and only needed developing through piety and discipline. The new orientation of the faith at the hands of masterminds like Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu and others was called by its followers as the Mahayana (the Great Vehicle) in contradistinction to the Theravada which they designated as the Hinayana (the Little Vehicle). According to Dr. Radhakrishnan* Mahayanism is so called also because it includes a vast number of Bodhisattvas, arch-angels and saints, who are only the ancient gods of Vedic Aryans thinly disguised by Buddhistic symbolism.

During his lifetime the Buddha was held in the highest esteem by all kinds and classes of people, men and women, kings and commoners, the high castes and the low castes, and the rich and the poor. We have also seen how his relics were treasured at his death. The stupas in which they had been enshrined soon

*_Indian Philosophy_ page 598.

became places of pilgrimage for the faithful. The highly developed sculptural skill of the Greeks who ruled north-western India and the adjoining territories for some time was also laid under contribution by the faithful and representations of the Master in metal and stone soon came to adorn the places of worship. Wonderful chaityas were erected in the time of the Kushans and these were fitted not only with massive images of the Master and the principal Bodhisattvas but were also embellished with beautiful drawings and scrolls representing well-known scenes of the Buddha's earthly life. These gave the masses—converts from the various Hindu sects—an opportunity to satisfy their religious emotions and to gratify their inherited tendency for ritual and worship.

The new orientation of the faith was also partly the result of a change in the people's mood. They were no longer content with a sort of a negative philosophy of life. They were less stoical than the early converts. As has been well stated by an eminent writer* on Buddhism, "the ideal of the passive saint, spurning the world and overcoming his passions in solitude no longer fascinated, as it once had done the Indian imagination."They wanted a more positive and less exacting philosophy of life. This is what the new orientation of the faith sought to do. Dr. Radhakrishnan† says that the Mahayana "offers to all beings in all worlds salvation by faith and love as well as by knowledge" while the Hinayana "only avails to convey over the rough sea of becoming to the farther shore of *nibbana* those few strong souls who require no external spiritual aid nor the consolation of worship". The Hinayana, he adds, "is

*J.B. Pratt, in his *The pilgrimage of Buddhism.*

†*Indian Philosophy* page 591.

exceeding hard; whereas the burden of the Mahayana is light, and does not require that a man should immediately renounce the world and all the affections of humanity". There was, however, no great conflict between the two schools both of which were rooted in the teachings of the Buddha. Their main difference was that while the Hinayanists stuck more closely to the original teachings of the Master the Mahayanists reinterpreted some of the doctrines and developed them further. The followers of the Mahayana and the Hinayana continued to exist side by side, sometimes living in the same monastery even.

Mahayana which had gradually been forming since the break-up of the Sangha at the time of the second great Buddhist Council received a great fillip in Kushan times. We have already seen two of its high priests Ashvaghosha and Nagarjuna living in Kashmir in their times. According to Taranatha Kashmir was also the scene of activities of Vatsa* who taught that "individuality (*pudgala*) persists through the innumerable existences of an individual and ceases only on his attainment of *Nirvana*".

Kashmir, it has been noted earlier, was a stronghold of the Sarvastivadins. In the post-Kushan period also Kashmir continued to be a seat of Buddhist learning —both Mahayanist and Hinayanist. Although the faith no longer enjoyed royal patronage the self-abnegating shramanas continued to pursue their faith and their philosophical studies in the large number of monasteries in the Valley. Some of them went to other

*See the introductory notes to *Gilgit Manuscripts Vol. I.*

countries also to propagate the message of the Buddha or its new interpretation. Their missionary zeal was so great that it made them disregard the hazards and difficulties of travel in those early days.

After Nagarjuna's departure from the Valley a number of Kashmiri monks used to go south to visit Sri Parvata where the celebrated philosopher has taken up his residence and which in course of time developed into a great centre of Buddhist learning. Monks in larger numbers, however, went to the northern regions where they played a conspicuous part in the propagation of Buddhism. To do their job effectively they often acquired mastery in the language of the region they visited and translated the principal Sanskrit works into it for the benefit of the local people. Hiuen Tsang records that one of the monasteries in Khotan had in earlier times been erected by a king in honour of Vairochana, an arhat who had gone there from Kashmir to propagate the Buddhist faith.

The monastery was erected about 211 B.C. by the King, Vijayasambhava, who was the grandson of Kustana, a son of Ashoka. It housed the sacred relics which Vairochana had brought from Kashmir.

As a result of the efforts of these early pioneers Kashmir came to enjoy such high reputation as a centre of Buddhist learning that scholars from neighbouring countries did not regard their education complete without a visit to the Valley. Among the Buddhist luminaries who trekked to Kashmir to study the Buddhist *shastras* with the masters there are Asanga and Vasubandhu. The two brothers who lived in the fourth century A.D., were born of Brahman parents at

Purushapura or Peshawar. At first both of them belonged to the Sarvastivada school, having received their early education in Kashmir under the celebrated teacher Sanghabhadra. Asanga who was the elder of the two later on developed the Yogachara school of Buddhism which relies on the practice of *yoga* (meditation) for the achievement of Enlightenment. It is also called Vijnanavada, "the doctrine of Mind-consciousness". The younger brother Vasubandhu who also accepted Asanga's views ultimately is well-known for his monumental work *Abhidharmakosha*, an encyclopaedia of Buddhist philosophy and metaphysics.

CHAPTER IX

KASHMIR'S CONTRIBUTION TO BUDDHISM IN CHINA

One of the greatest scholars who visited Kashmir in the beginning of the second half of the fourth century A.D. was named Kumarajiva*. Kumarajiva's name was derived from the names of his father Kumara or Kumarayana and his mother Jiva. Kumara who hailed from a respectable family of hereditary ministers in a north Indian State (possibly Kashmir) had renounced his claims to the ancestral office early in life and become a Buddhist monk. Later he went to Kucha where he rose to the position of the royal preceptor and married the king's sister or near relation Jiva who had fallen in love with him.

At the early age of nine Kumarajiva's mother who had joined the Buddhist Sangha two years earlier brought him to Kashmir. Here he studied Buddhist texts for three years under the well-known scholar Bandhudatta. On their way back from the Valley mother and son spent some time in visiting the well-known Buddhist institutions in Tukharistan and Kashgar. In the latter country where he stayed for about a year

*In the introduction to *The Diamond Sutra* William Gemmell says that Kumarajiva was a native of Kashmir.

he was requested by the ruler to remain permanently but on the pressing invitations of his relative, the king of Kucha,* the teen-ager monk and his mother returned to their native place.

Kumarajiva who is believed to have been born in 344 A.D. was ordained at the age of twenty. On his return from Kashmir an arhat had told his mother that a great future lay in store for her son. This prophecy proved to be true. At Kucha where he spent the early part of his life, Kumarajiva was the recipient of high honours. He was accorded a personal welcome by the king on his return from Kashmir and other places. A new convent was specially erected for him. Here he further studied the Sarvastivada *Vinaya* with another distinguished Kashmiri scholar, Vimalaksha, who had come to Kucha, probably at the invitation of the pious ruler.

About 382 A.D. Kucha fell on evil days. It was attacked by a Chinese general† named Lu Koang and its ruler defeated. In those days it was not uncommon for the victor to carry away eminent literary men in the defeated territory along with the prisoners made there. Kumarajiva also met this fate. At first he is stated to have been treated with scant regard and forced to marry the daughter of his former patron who had been one of his pupils.‡ But his good luck was not long in reasserting itself. His great merits once again won him recognition and thereafter for nearly fifteen years he lived honourably at Leang-chou in Kansu province where he had been taken by the victorious general.

*R.S. Pandit gives his name as Suvarnadeva.

†According to Samuel Beal the General had been sent by Emperor Yao Hin with the specific purpose of bringing Kumarajiva. But that does not seem likely.

‡Vide: *Indian Teachers in China* by P.N. Bose.

During his long stay in Kansu, Kumarajiva's fame spread all over China and he received repeated invitations from Emperor Yao Hin to visit his capital, Changan. Thither he went in 401 A.D.

Kumarajiva stayed in the imperial capital till his death in 413 A.D. and at the request of the Emperor whole-heartedly devoted himself to propagating Buddhism, especially the Mahayana, among the Chinese people. To spread the faith widely he decided to translate the sacred Buddhist texts into the language of the people. And before his death he had accomplished the stupendous task of translating no less than a hundred Buddhist works from Sanskrit into Chinese.

The Japanese scholar Bunyiu Nanjio has listed about four dozen works by Kumarajiva in his *Catalogue*. These include *Saddharma-pundarika-sutra* which exalts the Buddha above all the other gods and promises Buddhahood to anyone who lives upto his teachings and performs meritorious acts including worship of relics and erection of stupas, *Mahaprajna-paramita sutra*, (dealing with the perfections and the highest wisdom of a Bodhisattva), *Sukhavati-Vyuha* (containing the Mahayanist view of paradise,) *Sarvapunya-samuchaya-samadhi-sutra*, *Sahasra-Buddha-nidana-sutra*, *Sutralankara-sutra*, *Avalakiteshvara-Bodhisattva-samanta - mukla - parivarta*, *Sarvastivada-pratimoksha*, and treatises on the lives of Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Deva (Aryadeva). Kumarajiva also translated *Tattvasiddhi-shastra* or *Satya-siddhi* of Harivarman, a Buddhist scholar of Kashmir.

Kumarajiva is regarded as one of the greatest translators of Sanskrit texts into Chinese. Some people are disposed to rank his style of writing as superior to that of Hiuen Tsang. He is even credited with the introduction of a new alphabet into China.

Kumarajiva's scholarly labours in the cause of his faith won him the love and admiration of the Chinese people. They regarded him as one of the 'four suns' of Buddhism and always referred to him as *Tungsheo* or one who though young in years is mature in the wisdom and virtues of old age*. Much against his wishes he is even stated to have been compelled by his patrons to marry a number of Chinese ladies so that he might leave behind offspring like himself. Kumarajiva is stated to have had over one thousand Chinese disciples, including Fa-Hien, the first great Chinese traveller to India.

While Kumarajiva was busy in translating the sacred Buddhist texts into the Chinese language his worthy disciple was engaged in the task of collecting more works of this type in the land of the Buddha's birth. Fa-Hien† who has left an interesting account of India in the time of the Guptas, returned to his native land in 412 A.D. while his *guru* was yet alive. It is said that it was on the latter's advice that he wrote down *Fo-ku-ki* (Account of the Buddha's country). According to another version, however, Fa-Hien returned to China in 414 A.D. after Kumarajiva's death.

One or two translators of the Chinese traveller's account hold that Fa-Hien visited Kashmir also. But more generally he is credited with having visited only the frontier regions of Ladakh, Skardu and Darel. But Che-Yen who came to India about the time that Fa-Hien did is known to have visited Kashmir. He is stated to have persuaded the Kashmiri monks to send a

*Vide: Introduction to *The Diamond Sutra.*

†Fa-Hien left China in 399 A.D. with four other monks and returned to his country about 13 years later, after visiting some of the Central Asian countries, India, Ceylon and Java.

capable monk to China. Their choice fell upon one Buddhabhadra, a native of Nagarahara (Jalalabad) who was then studying in Kashmir. Che-Yen and Buddhabhadra then went to China by the southern route. They travelled via Burma to Tonkin from where they sailed by boat. In China Buddhabhadra worked with Kumarajiva for some time in Chang-an. Later he collaborated with Fa-Hien. In all he is said to have translated fifteen works into Chinese.

Kumarajiva's literary output was not achieved single handed. From time to time he had the assistance of other distinguished Indian scholars—mostly Kashmiris—available to him. By a stroke of singular good fortune one of his teachers, Vimalaksha visited China in 406 A.D. Kumarajiva extended him a cordial welcome and the two worked together for some time. The distinguished pupil, however, predeceased his *guru* who then went south and translated some more Sanskrit works into Chinese. Vimalaksha died in 418 A.D., at the age of 77.

Another Kashmiri monk closely associated with Kumarajiva in his pious labours was named Punyatara or Punyatrato. He had come to China on his own but soon after his arrival he came under Kumarajiva's influence and worked with him.

Kashmiri monks visited the Central Asian countries and China before Kumarajiva's time also but few records* about them have so far come to light. Among the other monks who visited China about the time that

*Archaeological discoveries of Sir Aurel Stein and other explorers in various places in Central Asia have brought to light a number of Buddhist manuscripts, paintings and sculptures.

Kumarajiva was taken there are Dharmaraksha, Sanghabhata and Gautama Sanghadeva, The last-mentioned who went to China in 383 A.D. was highly respected. It is said that a monastery was specially erected for him in South China by a high official. He translated seven Buddhist works into Chinese.

Buddhayasha was another master mind from Kashmir who visited China while Kumarajiva was yet alive. Dr. P. C. Bagchi* has given some interesting details about him. He says: "Buddhayasha was born in a Brahmanical family. His father was no believer in Buddhism. On one occasion he assaulted a Buddhist monk. Retribution came in the form of paralysis of the hands. In order to expiate his sin, he invited the monk he had assaulted, honoured him and gave him his son Yasa who was only 13 years old at the time. Yasa became a monk and followed his teacher to distant countries, taking instruction in the sacred lore. He completed his study at the age of 27 when he became a full-fledged monk. He then left Kashmir for foreign countries" and first went to Sha-le (Kashgar).

It was in Kashgar that he first came into contact with Kumarajiva. Kumarajiva was then in Kashgar on his way back from Kashmir to Kucha. Buddhayasha had come there in response to the invitation of the ruler who had called an assembly of three thousand Buddhist monks. The pious ruler was so much impressed with Buddhayasha that he invited him to live in the palace where Kumarajiva studied some Buddhist texts and Hindu *shastras* and sciences with him. Buddhayasha lived in Kashgar for a number of years at the

*Vide: His *India and China*.

end of which he went to China and collaborated with Kumarajiva in his work. Earlier when Kucha was attacked by Lu Koang, Buddhayasha, anxious about the safety of Kumarajiva, had persuaded the ruler of Kashgar to send an army to the assistance of Kucha, but the place fell before the army could reach there.

Buddhayasha who is believed to have returned to Kashmir after Kumarajiva's death translated four Sanskrit works into Chinese. Translation of two other works is ascribed to another Kashmiri monk, Dharmayasha who was in China from 407 to 415 A.D.

It would be wrong to assume that Kashmiri monks went to propagate Buddhism in the northern regions only. They went in all directions. Besides visiting the difficult northern countries they wandered over the length and breadth of India. Mention has already been made of the erection of a *chaityagriha* for Kashmiri monks at Sri Parvata in Andhra in the third century A.D. Elsewhere also they won, by their scholarship and piety, high renown for their country and for themselves the affectionate reverence of the people.

Though Kashmir is singularly fortunate in having a historical record from the earliest times yet most unfortunately it has nothing to say about these illustrious sons of the Valley. In recent times, however, we have come to know a little about some of them from other sources, mostly non-Indian. Thus it is known that a number of Kashmiri monks went to China by the sea route. One of them named Buddhajiva reached Nanking in 423 A.D. He is credited with the translation of three Sanskrit works

into Chinese. The greatest Kashmiri monk to visit China by the southern route was Gunavarman.

The story of Gunavarman's life is highly interesting. He was descended from a royal family of Kipin or Kashmir. His grandfather Haribhadra having been banished from the kingdom on account of his oppression, Gunavarman's father Sanghananda passed his days as an exile in a forest. It was here in the midst of bounteous Nature that Gunavarman was born and bred up.

From very early in life Gunavarman had a religious bent of mind. The story is told* that in his boyhood he refused to kill a fowl even though his mother asked him to do so. She even told him that she would suffer the penalty in his place if he considered killing a sin; but in vain. Later one day when he had accidentally burnt his finger he went to her and requested her to bear the pain in his stead. Surprised, the mother said that that was not possible as the pain was in his body. The precocious child then reminded her that similarly she could not suffer the consequences of his sins in his place.

Gunavarman became a monk at the age of twenty. But even before his ordination he had mastered all the Buddhist religious texts and he was in consequence known as *Tripiṭakacharya* or master of the *Tripitaka*.

About ten years later when the Kashmir king died without leaving behind a male issue Gunavarman was approached by the ministers to ascend the throne. But he declined. He left Kashmir soon after and travelled south. He crossed into Ceylon and preached there for sometime. From Ceylon he went to Java which

*Vide: *Indian Teachers in China.*

then was a flourishing Hindu kingdom. On arrival in the island Gunavarman was accorded a great welcome. The king's mother who had dreamt of his coming one day earlier had prevailed upon her son to welcome him personally. Later she persuaded him to accept the teachings of the Buddha.

The royal family having embraced Buddhism, Gunavarman was asked to spread the message of the Buddha among the people. This he willingly did and before long the island was converted to Buddhism.

The conversion of Java to Buddhism was a great achievement which attracted notice in all eastern countries. Buddhist communities in different countries rejoiced in this vicotry of the faith. Gunavarman who was responsible for it received urgent invitations to visit the different countries in South-East Asia. It was while he was on his way to one such country that a change in the direction of the wind took the ship in which he was travelling to Canton. This was in 424 A.D. About the same time Chinese monks were landing in Java to request Gunavarman to come to China. They had been deputed for the purpose by the Emperor on the repeated requests of some leading Chinese monks in Nanking.

As soon as the Chinese Emperor came to know that the great Kashmiri sage was in his country, he ordered the provincial governors and other officers to look after all his requirements and to take steps to send him to the capital. He arrived at Nanking in 431 A.D. and was enthusiastically welcomed. The Emperor went in person to meet him and became his disciple. The enlightened monk was lodged in a big monastery known

as *Jitavanavihara* after the celebrated monastery of the same name in India. Here Gunavarman received the homage of the high and the low alike and preached the Buddhist doctrine.

Gunavarman was not destined to live long and passed away (at the age of 67) within about a year of his arrival in Nanking. But during this short time also he translated nearly a dozen works. He also organised a Sangha of Chinese nuns.

In Nanking Gunavarman is believed to have been assisted in his work by another Kashmiri monk Dharmamitra. Dharmamitra who went to China from Kucha is stated* to have founded a vihara and planted about a thousand trees in Tun-Huang. Later he went to South China where he came across Gunavarman. He died in 442 A.D. at the ripe old age of 87. He also translated a number of Sanskrit works into Chinese.

Gunavarman's was not an attitude of meek submission and passivity in the face of danger and wrong. Personally brave and adventurous he taught his followers also to be so. It is related† that soon after Java had turned Buddhist the island was attacked by hostile troops. (They perhaps felt encouraged because under the influence of the new faith the ruler of Java had issued a proclamation against all killing). The ruler was at a loss to know what to do. He therefore sought Gunavarman's advice about if it would be transgression of the Buddhist law if he fought the enemies. The great teacher advised him to fight, saying that it was every-

*Vide: *India and China.*

†In *The History and Culture of the Indian People Vol. III* published by the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

one's duty to fight those who tried to deprive him of what was legitimately his. The king, therefore, met his enemies on the battlefield and inflicted a crushing defeat on them.

It has been stated above that Gunavarman's grandfather Haribhadra was a king of Kashmir who had been exiled from his kingdom on account of his oppressive rule. But we come across no king of this name in Kalhana's *Rajutarangini*. Nevertheless it has been noted that the last ruler of the Gonanda dynasty, Yudhisthira was deposed by his ministers to make way for a foreigner, Pratapaditya. The new line of rulers also came to an early end with the death of Pratapaditya's grandson, Tunjina. The Kashmir historian tells us that Tunjina's death brought to the throne of Kashmir Vijaya of a different dynasty. It therefore seems probable that Haribhadra is no other than Kalhana's Yudhisthira and that the throne of Kashmir was offered to his grandson Gunavarman when the royal line founded by the Gupta prince came to an end with Tunjina's death. There is, however, one difficulty in this assumption and that is that the Kashmir historian has placed the reigns of both Tunjina and his father Jalaukas at 60 years each. But the difficulty vanishes if we remember that such lengthy reigns for father and son are highly improbable. Kalhana's sources seem to have confused the life-span of these two rulers (as of many others) with the length of their rules. As already pointed out Kalhana's chronology in the early part of his *Chronicle* is none-too-reliable.

CHAPTER X

HIUEN TSANG IN KASHMIR

Kashmir, it has been noted, became a principal seat of Buddhist learning from about the beginning of the second century and large numbers of aspirants from the neighbouring territories flocked to it for study and edification. Among those who visited the Valley in the fourth century mention has already been made of Asanga and Vasubandhu and Kumarajiva and Buddhabhadra. Earlier a Central Asian monk named Buddhadana is believed to have visited the valley twice for studies before going to China in 310 A.D.* Another celebrated monk Dharmakshema who later fell a victim to the jealousy of a former patron– the ruler of a western principality in China– had also visited Kashmir for study. Dharmakshema hailed from Central India.

As a result of the pious labours of scholars like Kumarajiva, Buddhayasha and Gunavarman, Kashmir came to enjoy high renown for learning and scholarship in China also. So whenever Buddhist monks and scholars from that country came to India– the land where the Buddha was born and lived– either

*See *Indo-Chinese Relations by* Dr. Chou Hsiang-Kuang.

for pilgrimage or in search of further enlightenment as to the doctrines of the faith they made it a point to visit the Valley.

Among the earliest Chinese visitors to Kashmir is Che-Yen who came to India at the same time as Fa-Hien. Another Chinese monk Che-mong visited the Valley and Dardistan about five years later. Still another monk Fa-Yong who started on the Indian pilgrimage about fifteen years later is known to have studied in Kashmir for about a year. Here he took the Sanskrit name of Dharmakara.*

The most illustrious Chinese pilgrim of all to visit the Valley was Hiuen Tsang. The youngest of four brothers in a talented and respectable family Hiuen Tsang was born in 603 A.D. in Chin-Liu in the province of Ho-nan. After some preliminary education by his father, the precocious child was taken by his second brother, who was a monk, to the eastern capital, Lo-Yang. By virtue of his great intelligence and diligence in the monastery, an exception was made in his case and he was admitted without examination among the monks at the early age of thirteen. For seven years thereafter he travelled extensively with his brother to complete his education. He received full monastic orders when he was twenty. After that he went to Chang-an in search of a good instructor who could clear the doubts and difficulties that still disturbed his mind about the doctrines of the faith. It was here that Hiuen Tsang decided, at the age of twentysix, to travel in the countries of the west in order to consult wise and learned men on the many points of the law which, he felt, he had

*Indo-Chinese Relations.

not yet understood properly or fully. Hiuen Tsang who was encouraged by the example of Fa-Hien and other Chinese pilgrims entered the Valley by the rocky pass which formed its north-western approach.

Reports of Hiuen Tsang's fame seem to have reached Kashmir before his actual arrival. For when he arrived at the outer end of the pass leading into the Valley he found the Kashmir king's maternal uncle* present to receive him. The king had also sent his mother and younger brother with chariots and horses to escort him to the capital. On his way thither the pilgrim spent a night at the *Hushkaravihara* in the city founded by the Kushan ruler Hushka. The pilgrim offered worship at this and the other monasteries on the way to the capital, where he arrived after some days.

The king himself conducted the pilgrim into the capital. He received him at the royal *dharmashala* which was at a short distance† from the capital. The king was accompanied by about a thousand people, including the Buddhist monks, his ministers and other prominent people in the capital. After the ceremonious welcome at the royal *dharmashala* the pilgrim was placed on one of the king's elephants and taken to the city. The people who had come to receive him carried standards and parasols and burning incense. En route to the capital flowers were showered upon him.

On arrival in the capital he was lodged in the Jayendravihara. Next day on the king's invitation he shifted to the palace to receive his offerings. The

*Vide: *On Yuan Chwang* by Thomas Watters.

†Thomas Watters puts it at a *Yojana* (about six miles) and Samuel Beal at one *Li* (about one fifth of a mile).



HIUEN TSANG
(Courtesy, Archaeological Department, New Delhi)



Shankaracharya Hill in Srinagar. The sangharama with the tooth relic stood at the foot of this hill on its right.

large number of distinguished priests who had also been invited on this occasion were directed by the king to extend all facilities and help to the distinguished visitor from China in the prosecution of his studies and investigations. Not only that. He gave him twenty clerks to copy the sacred texts which he might wish to have and five men to act as his personal attendants. These latter were instructed to furnish him whatever he might require at the expense of the treasury.

Most unfortunately both Hiuen Tsang and his disciple who wrote an account of his life have failed to give the name of the royal patron who was so hospitable and generous to him. But his patronage of the pilgrim was no isolated phenomenon. From a different source we learn that another Chinese scholar, Suan-hui by name, was also lodged in the palace as an honoured guest for about a year.

Hiuen Tsang remained in Kashmir for two years during the course of which he studied the various *sutras* and *shastras* and visited the various Buddhist monasteries and stupas to pay his homage to the relics enshrined there. He stopped wherever he found teachers capable of improving his knowledge. At the Jayendravihara where he stayed mostly he studied the various Buddhist texts including the works of Nagarjuna with a venerable monk aged about seventy. The learned teacher Bhadanta or Yasha explained to him all the difficult passages in the sacred texts. Their discussions, it is stated, were so interesting and instructive that learned men from all parts of the kingdom flocked to the place to hear them. The favour shown to Hiuen Tsang both by the king and the principal monks excited the

jealousy of other monks but through his intelligence and affability the Chinese pilgrim was able to overcome all enmity and continue his studies undisturbed.

Hiuen Tsang who in his sixteen-year travels covered an estimated 15,000 miles has left an interesting account of the condition of Buddhism in Kashmir in his time. He noticed heretics (non-believers in Buddhism) and believers living side by side. Though he records that "at the present time this kingdom is not much given to the faith and the temples of heretics are their sole concern", he found a large number of Buddhist monasteries in existence. In addition to four Ashokan stupas containing the bodily relics of the Buddha, he places the number of Buddhist monasteries at over a hundred*. In these lived about 5,000 monks.

In addition to the Hushkaravihara and the Jayendravihara which are specifically mentioned in connection with his residence in the Valley, the pilgrim himself has left a description of some of the outstanding monasteries of his time. One such sangharama (monastic establishment) lay on the south of a mountain about 10 *li* (nearly 2 miles) to the south-east of the new city (Pravarapura) and to the north of the old city (Shrinagari). About 300 monks put up in this monastery which may easily be located as having existed somewhere below Aitagaj at the foot of the Shankaracharya hill in Srinagar. In the stupa of this monastery was a tooth of the Buddha "yellowish-white" in colour. The place was held in great veneration and writing as late as the

*It may be noted that the number of *sangharamas* in Kanauj was also only 100, though the monks living in them numbered 10,000.

close of the last century Sir Walter Lawrence says* that a Ladakhi lama of the Yellow Sect, who gave him much information about old Buddhist places in Kashmir said that the Shankaracharya hill continued to be regarded as sacred by the Buddhists, who called it *Pus-Pahari*.

Hiuen Tsang has an interesting story to tell about how the sacred relic came to Kashmir. According to it the Buddha's tooth had been got by a native *shramana* from outside. The Chinese pilgrim records that in old days when Kashmir had been overrun by people of the *Kritiya* race and the Law of the Buddha overthrown, the monks were compelled to take refuge in various places outside Kashmir. One of the monks instead of staying at one place decided to visit various Buddhist places of pilgrimage to offer worship there. After some time, learning that his country was once again pacified and settled, he decided to return. But on the way back home he was overtaken by a herd of elephants who carried him to a jungle where one of them was lying in great agony on account of a bamboo splinter which had run into his foot. The Kashmiri monk took it out, dressed the wound and then bandaged it with a piece of cloth torn from his own garment. The grateful beasts thereupon presented him with a golden casket containing the Buddha's tooth. Resuming his homeward journey the priest came to a rapid river on the western approaches to his native land. While crossing it, however, the boat nearly overturned. The other passengers ascribed this to the Naga-dragons coveting the relic which he was carrying and he was made to throw it into the river.

*In *The Valley of Kashmir.*

He therefore went back to India and learnt the knowledge of bringing the Naga-dragons under control. Equipped with this knowledge he returned to the place and recovered the lost treasure. He then went to Kashmir where the sacred relic was placed in the sangharama at the foot of the Shankaracharya hill on its south-east.

This tooth relic was later surrendered to Harsha-vardhana of Kanauj. Obviously he must have heard of it from Hiuen Tsang. In the *Life* of the pilgrim it is stated that having heard of the tooth relic Harsha came to the frontier of Kashmir and asked for permission to see and worship it. The monks, however, were unwilling to consent to his request and concealed it. But the ruler of Kashmir 'fearing the exalted character of Shiladitya' got it from them and presented it to him. It appears that Harsha-Shiladitya threatened use of force if he was not given the sacred relic.

Hiuen Tsang adds that fourteen or fifteen *li* (nearly 3 miles) to the south of the sangharama containing the tooth relic was a small sangharama in which there was a standing figure of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva. This monastery must have been at Shrinagari (Pandrethan), where a large size image of a Bodhisattva has been excavated in recent times.

About 30 *li* to its south-east was another old one. This sangharama, on the side of a great mountain, was in ruins in the time of Hiuen Tsang. But its shape was imposing and its masonry strong. The only building left erect was a small 'double-tower' in one corner. Here he found about thirty monks studying the Mahayana. He adds that the Sarvastivadin Buddhist

philosopher Sanghabhadra— a widely travelled man, deeply versed in the *Tripitaka*— had composed the *Nyayanusara-shastra** at this place. On the left and right of this monastery were stupas enshrining the bodily relics of great arhats.

From Hiuen Tsang's account it is clear that the monastery had been an important one in old days when great arhats lived there. But the monastery has not been traced so far.

Though both Hiuen Tsang and his disciple who wrote an account of his life positively hold that Kanishka's Council was held in Kashmir yet curiously enough they have failed to indicate the exact spot where it was held. Perhaps its location was kept a closely guarded secret by the monks who knew about it, particularly in times when the number of heretics was large and the ruler was also not a Buddhist.

If, however, we substitute 'northeast' in place of 'southeast' in Hiuen Tsang's description and locate the ancient sangharama about 30 *li* or so from the one containing the Tathagata's tooth it would almost exactly correspond to the Harwan monastery. In that case, however, we will have to assume that a mistake crept in when after over a dozen years' wanderings through the length and breadth of India, the Chinese pilgrim returned to his home country and wrote down an account of the places he had visited. But in view of the accuracy of his descriptions that would be

*The work is stated to have received high praise at the hands of Vasubandhu, whose views (expressed in his *Abhidharmakosha*) it sought to refute. Vasubandhu had received his early education under Sanghabhadra.

too large an assumption to make. As it is, therefore, the mountain on the side of which the sangharama stood would appear to be the one above Khonamuh, the ancient Khonamusa founded by Khagendra, father of the first Buddhist ruler of Kashmir. The ruins at the place may be those of the sangharama of Hiuen Tsang's description. But a final verdict on the matter will have to await the results of further research and fresh archaeological exploration.

The mountain-side on which the sangharama stood was credited with many miraculous circumstances in Hiuen Tsang's time. The devout pilgrim believed that throughout the year 'wild beasts and mountain apes gather flowers to offer as religious oblations' to the relics of the great arhats enshrined in the stupas on both sides of the monastery.

About 10 *li* (2 miles) to the east of the sangharama of the Buddha's tooth, between the crags of a mountain to the north, was another small sangharama in which, Hiuen Tsang says, the great 'master of *shastras*' Skandhila (So-kin-ta-lo) had in olden times composed the treatise called *Vibhashaprakarnapada-shastra*. This small convent also contained a fifty-foot stupa in which were preserved the earthly remains of an arhat. According to Hiuen Tsang this arhat had been an elephant in one of his previous lives, but through great piety and devotion he had not only attained the human form but *nirvana* or enlightenment also. This small sangharama must obviously have been on the Zabarvan mountain flanking the Dal Lake. Very likely it was somewhere near the now famous Chashma-Shahi spring. Or it may have been on the mountain spur where later on

Dara Shikoh, the enlightened son of Shah Jahan is stated to have built an astronomical observatory. The ruins of the observatory which was also used as a residence by Dara's teacher Mulla Shah, are now known as Pari Mahal (Palace of Fairies) or Kuntilun.

Two other monasteries have been referred to by Hiuen Tsang in his account of Kashmir. One of them called *Mai-lun* (in Chinese) was 200 *li* north-west of the capital. Here also a 'master of *shastras*' called Purna* had composed a commentary on the *Vibhashashastra*. According to the French writer Stanilas Julian, Vikritavana would be the Kashmiri equivalent of *Mai-Lun*. But Samuel Beal is doubtful about the correctness of the equation. The monastery most probably was the *Krityashramavihara* founded by Jalauka.

Another monastery referred to by the Chinese pilgrim rested on the southern slope of a mountain about 140 or 150 *li* to the west of the capital. Standing by the side of a river it belonged to the Mahasanghika Sect and housed about a hundred monks. In earlier days another 'master of *shastras*', Bodhila or Buddhatara had composed *Tsih-chin-lun* (*Tattvasanchayashastra*) at this spot. This sangharama appears to have given its name to the present-day village of Sangrom, situated about half a dozen miles from Baramulla.

In addition to the masters referred to above the others mentioned in the *Life* (of Hiuen Tsang) as having lived in Kashmir are Vishuddhasimha and Jinabandhu

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*Some authors have credited Purna with the conversion of Ashvaghosha who had earlier been a zealous devotee of the Brahmanic gods, especially Maheshvara. But that seems unlikely unless Purna is assumed to be another name of Parshva.

(Mahayanists), Sagatamitra and Vasumitra (Sarvastivadins) and Jinatara and Suryadeva (Mahasanghikas). Another illustrious Sarvastivadin of Kashmir mentioned by the pilgrim was named Vimlamitra. He lived sometime after Sanghabhadra and Vasubandhu.

At the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit Buddhism was a living faith not only in Kashmir but also in most of the adjoining territories which were subject to it. This fact is confirmed by the Chinese pilgrim who visited these areas. In Urasa (Hazara) from where he came to Kashmir there was a stupa built by Ashoka. By its side was a sangharama where a few disciples of the Mahayana Sect lived. The people, however, did not believe in the religion of the Buddha. On the contrary, the people of Parnotsa (Poonch) where he went from Kashmir were upright Buddhists.

Hiuen Tsang crossed into Poonch over the mountains (by the Tosa-maiden route). But even here the sangharamas—five in number—were mostly deserted. There were a few monks in the sangharama to the north of the chief town. The stupa attached to it was celebrated for its miracles.

From Poonch Hiuen Tsang went to Rajapuri (Rajouri). Here he found ten sangharamas but with a very small number of monks. Travelling south from here and crossing the Chenab near Akhnoor* he next went to Sakala (Sialkot) in Takka land which lay between the Jhelum and the Ravi. Jammu province which appears to have been included in Menander's

*Akhnoor is a small town on the Chenab, at a distance of about 19 miles from Jammu.

dominion was also Buddhist at one time. This is confirmed by the ruins of a big monastery, terra-cotta heads and other traces which in recent times have been found in Akhnoor. These ruins are usually assigned to the sixty century A.D.

Hiuen Tsang visited Kashmir only once— on his way to India. On the return journey home he could not visit the Valley although when he was in Takshashila, the ruler of Kashmir sent messengers to invite him to his capital. The pilgrim was unable to accept the invitation 'on account of heavily-laden elephants' carrying holy books, images and sacred relics. The Kashmir ruler, therefore, went in person to pay him his respects. He is stated to have met him in Kapisa (Kafiristan beyond the Indus) and remained with him for a few days before returning to the Valley.

Hiuen Tsang's account of the many monasteries in the Valley naturally excites one's curiosity about their lay-out, construction, etc. But most unfortunately he is silent in this regard. Nevertheless certain interesting details do emerge from his descriptions. Some of these sangharamas, especially the one at the foot of the Shankaracharya hill, must have consisted of a number of spacious buildings to enable them to house hundreds of monks. The sangharama which was at a distance of about six miles from Pandrethan had an imposing look even in its ruined state and its masonry was strong. The buildings of these sangharamas must have been several storeys high. This is seen from the fact that the only building left standing in the ruined sangharama was a double-storeyed tower. The sites of these monasteries were carefully chosen. Almost

all the monasteries that Hiuen Tsang mentions were on the side of some mountain or the other, amidst beautiful natural surroundings and commanding a panoramic view of the vast stretches of level ground in front. Also the monasteries were either by the side of a river or near a spring. In many of them, we are told, there were stupas containing the relics of arhats. The stupa in the small monastery on the side of Zabarban mountain was fifty feet in height.

Though the Chinese pilgrim has failed to give a full description of any of the monasteries in the Valley, yet it may safely be assumed that they did not differ materially from the ones in the other parts of the country (India). And about these latter he observes:

"The sangharamas are constructed with extraordinary skill. A three-storeyed tower is erected at each of the four angles (corners). The beams and the projecting heads are carved with great skill in different shapes. The doors, windows and the low walls are painted profusely; the monks' cells are ornamental on the inside and plain on the outside. In the very middle of the building is the hall, high and wide. There are various storeyed chambers and turrets of different height and shape, without any fixed rule. The doors open towards the east..".

CHAPTER XI

THE KARKOTAS

With Durlabhavardhana we enter upon the Golden Age of Kashmir's long and chequered history. He is represented by Kalhana as an offspring of the Naga deity, *Karkota**, from whom is derived the dynastic appellation.

Though risen from a humble origin Durlabhavardhana proved to be a worthy occupant of the Kashmir throne. His reign is important in the Buddhist history of Kashmir as it was then that Hiuen Tsang is believed to have visited the place. The celebrated Chinese scholar who lived as an honoured guest in the Valley for two years has left an interesting account of the Kashmir of his time.

Kashmir was then a powerful kingdom with the territories to its south and west acknowledging its sway. Hiuen Tsang clearly records that Taxila (Rawalpindi district), Urasa (Hazara), Simhapura, (Salt Range region), and the neighbouring hill states of Rajapuri (Rajouri) and Parnotsa (Poonch), were subject to Kashmir and paid tribute to its ruler.

*Karkotnag in Anantnag district is still held in veneration by the Hindus of Kashmir.

The Chinese scholar found *Kia-shi-mi-lo* (Kashmir) peaceful and prosperous. Learning was held in high esteem in this country whose people, he says, were themselves well instructed. The great veneration which learning commanded is amply borne out by the welcome which Hiuen Tsang received on his arrival.

Buddhism was one of the honoured faiths in the Valley. The pilgrim himself put the number of monks at about five thousand and they lived in over a hundred sacred buildings scattered all over the Valley. More such buildings continued to be put up in Durlabhavardhana's reign. The queen herself had a vihara constructed near Chandragrama (Chandragom).

Kashmir enjoyed great prosperity during the fifty years' rule of Durlabhavardhana's virtuous son Durlabhaka. Known also as Pratapaditya, he married a lady Narendraprabha from Rohtak and from her had three sons Chandrapida, Tarapida and Muktapida. The princes were also known as Vajraditya, Udayaditya and Lalitaditya.

The eldest of them, Chandrapida, who succeeded Pratapaditya was a model ruler. He had a high sense of kingly duties and would not tread upon the rights of even the meanest in the land. He is known for his justice and in his time even the highest could not escape punishment for their misdeeds. In fact it is stated that it was a Brahman murderer whom he had tracked down and punished that brought about his death through sorcery only after nine years of his accession to the throne.

Chandrapida's wife Prakashadevi was a patron of Buddhism and built a vihara.

Chandrapida's benign rule was followed by about four years' oppressive rule of Tarapida. Thereafter the throne of Kashmir passed into the hands of Lalitaditya, the greatest of Kashmir's indigenous rulers.

Lalitaditya

Lalitaditya was the youngest son of Pratapaditya. He was a great conqueror and the major part of his thirtysix years' reign was passed in expeditions abroad. These extended from Bengal in the east to Kathiawar in the west and from Malabar in the south to the Central Asian deserts in the north. His most notable victory in India was achieved against Yashovarman of Kanauj who was then the most powerful ruler in northern India. Thereafter he received homage or tribute from most other rulers in the country. His interest in Buddhism is revealed by the fact that he carried a colossal image of the Buddha from the eastern regions to Kashmir.

After his successful exploits in India, Lalitaditya turned his attention to his northern neighbours. Though largely unexplored, these difficult regions were not altogether unknown to the people of Kashmir. A general idea of the wealth and prosperity of some of them must have been available to them from the accounts of traders and Buddhist missionaries who had visited them.

In the north Lalitaditya succeeded in subjugating a number of territories, including Kamboja (Eastern Afghanistan), Tukharistan (the region on the Upper Oxus including Balkh and Badakshan), Ladakh, the land of the Bhauttas and Dardistan, including Gilgit.

According to the *Chinese Annals* the Kashmir ruler once sent an ambassador to China to ask the Chinese Emperor to make common cause with him against a common enemy, probably Tibet, which was then developing into a potential threat to both India and China. The Kashmir ambassador claimed that his master had defeated the Tibetans several times and that in alliance with a Central Indian king he had blocked all the five routes into their territory.

The land of the Tukharas being one of the farthest in the north which Lalitaditya brought under his sway, great significance was attached to his conquest of it by the Kashmiris. Al Biruni records that a festival in commemoration of Lalitaditya's victory over the Tukharas was held in Kashmir about the middle of March every year.

From the conquered territories Lalitaditya brought not only riches but also a number of talented persons who were appointed to high offices. Kalhana says that a number of Shahi princes were in his employ. Some of them—if not all— must have been Buddhists. His Chief Minister, Chankuna who hailed from the land of the Tukharas, was an ardent Buddhist.

On Lalitaditya's return from his conquests abroad Kashmir entered upon a period of great magnificence and unprecedented constructional activity. The vast treasures which he had brought from the subdued regions were spent in the building of new towns and splendid edifices. The ruins of some of these are yet extant; testifying to the beauty and grandeur of the originals and the consummate architectural skill of their builders.

The foremost among all his foundations was the new capital Parihasapora near the confluence of the Vitasta and the Sindh, about a dozen miles from Srinagar. In this town the great king erected some of the most magnificent buildings ever built in Kashmir. The ruins of some of these have been excavated in recent times.

Like Ashoka, Lalitaditya extended his patronage to all the faiths prevalent in the Valley in his time. Though himself not a Buddhist, he built a huge vihara —the *Rajavihara*—in Parihasapora. The stately struc ture whose ruins are found in the north-eastern part of the Parihosapora *karewa* or plateau comprised a large quadrangle and a number of lofty chapels. According to Kak* the Rajavihara or royal monastery was a quadrangle of twentysix cells enclosing a square courtyard which was originally paved with stone flags. In front of the cells was a broad verandah, which was probably covered, the roof being supported by a colonnade which ran along the edge of the ten-foot high plinth. In the middle of the west wall were three cells preceded by a raised vestibule projecting into the courtyard. The celebrated Kashmiri archaeologist thinks that these apartments may have been occupied by the abbot of of the monastery. Near a corner in the courtyard was a large trough which may have served as a water reservoir.

The vihara had been well endowed and Kalhana in whose time it was still in existence calls it the 'ever-rich' Rajavihara. Before excavation Stein had noted

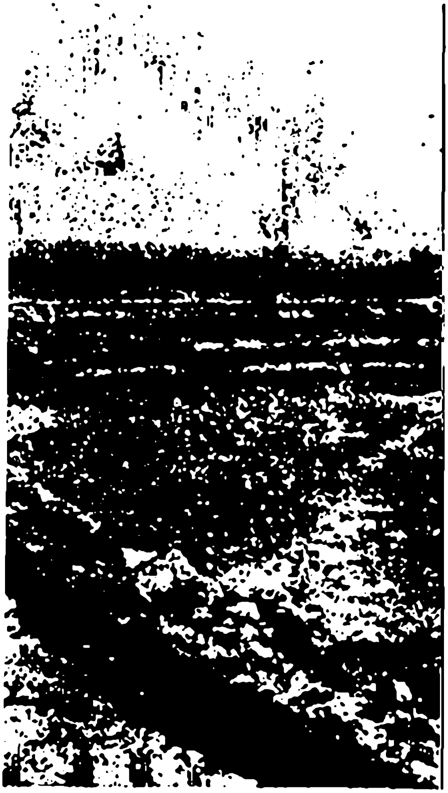
Ancient Monuments of Kashmir.

the external dimensions of the mound comprising the ruins at about 150 ft. by 140 ft.

Among the other ruins excavated at Paraspor (Parihasapora) are those of another vihara and a chaitya. The ruins to the south of the Rajavihara are believed to be those of the chaitya built by Lalitaditya. This noble edifice with a double base possessed some of the biggest blocks of stone that have ever been used in Kashmir buildings. Some of them compare favourably with those used in ancient Egyptian buildings . A single stone-block in the sanctum measures 14′×12×′5′. The sanctum measures 26 ft. square and most probably contained the colossal image of the Buddha which the king had got from Magadha during his conquering expedition in the east. This was later replaced by another massive brass image of the Buddha weighing several hundred maunds, (84000 *prasthas** according to Kalhana), when the one got from outside was given to Chankuna, at his request, for being placed in his vihara.

The Tukhara or Turkish minister's vihara has been located in the north-eastern corner of the Paraspor *karewa* a little to the north of the Rajavihara. The monastery which contained a high stupa was known as the *Chankunavihara* after its founder. It was embellished with a number of golden images of the Buddha by its founder who was an alchemist. Stein noted the measurements of the mound containing the ruins of this monastery at about 400 ft. square. On the top of the mound about 30 ft. above the ground, was a remarkable block of stone 8½′×8½′×4½′. This stone had a

**Prastha* was a measure of weight in ancient times. It was equal to about three-fourths of a *seer*.



Basement



of Rajavihara at Parihasapora



Basement of Chankunavihara at Parihasapora.

large circular hole in its middle which, he says, may have formed the base of a high column or a colossal image. Kak is disposed to think that the huge stone belonged to the *hti* (finial) of the stupa. According to him the stupa was 128'-2" square in plan with off sets and a flight of steps on each side. The steps were flanked by plain rails and side walls which had pilasters in front decorated with carved figures.

Buddhist sacred structures were not erected in Paraspor only. The king himself put up another huge vihara with a stupa in the ancient town of Hushkapura. The ruins of the stupa have been located in the village of Ushkar near Baramulla. One of the large blocks of stone lying to the north of the stupa has written on one of its rough surfaces the name of the village in Sharda* characters *he-sh-ka-ra.*

Lalitaditya's stupa appears to have been erected over the site of an earlier one built probably in Kushan times. As already mentioned Hiuen Tsang passed his first night in the Valley in the monastery at Ushkar.

Another vihara built by Lalitaditya was named *Kridaramavihara* from the interesting fact that he ordered its erection while at play. Its exact location is not known but it must obviously have been in the new capital which, as its name Pariphasapora signifies, was built for merry-making.

Chankuna also built another vihara with a chaitya. That was in the other capital Pravarapura (Srinagar). This vihara, also known as Chankunavihara, had fallen

**Sharda*, a variant of Devanagri, is the ancient script of Kashmir. It continues to be in use by the Pandits of the Valley to this day.

into utter ruin in Kalhana's time when Sussala, the pious wife of the minister Rilhana, repaired and restored it. According to Stein the image of the Buddha which Lalitaditya had got from Magadha, was placed in this vihara by Chankuna after he got it from his master.

Chankuna's brother-in-law Ishanachandra who was the royal physician also put up a vihara with a number of golden images of the Buddha. The minister's wife constructed a well for the benefit of the ailing and the infirm. Kayya, a tributary Raja of Lata (southern and central Gujerat) also founded a vihara, the *Kayya-vihara* which was a marvel according to Kalhana. This vihara was the residence of the celebrated *bhikshu* Sarvajnamitra whom Kalhana compares to the Jina (the Buddha). The exact location of the viharas built by Kayya and Ishanachandra has not so far been determined and they may have been in either of the capitals. The site of Ishana's vihara may even be looked for somewhere near Khonamuh as Kalhana says that he got the wealth for building it through the favour of *Takshaka Naga*.

The reigns of Lalitaditya's successors were short-lived. His eldest son Kuvalyapida ruled but for a year during which he proved to be a delight of the people. He was of such a noble disposition that in atonement of the contemplated murder of an erring minister and his followers—the murder was, however, not carried out—he renounced the throne and became a recluse.

His younger brother Vajraditya who succeeded him was a tyrant and a debauchee. His evil habits brought about his death after a rule of seven years.

His son was no better than the father and was pulled down from the throne by his younger brother who was destined to enjoy it for a brief seven days only.

Jayapida, the youngest son of Vajraditya, who occupied the throne about twelve years after Lalitaditya tried to revive the glorious traditions of his illustrious grandfather. He was a strongly built person and killed, in single combat, a dreaded lion in Paundravardhana (Rajashahi district of Bengal) during his tour of conquest in northern and eastern India. This won him the affection of the ruling chief, Jayanta, who gave him his daughter in marriage. Before returning home Jayapida defeated five Gauda princes and made his father-in-law their overlord. He also defeated the ruler of Kanyakubja (Kanauj).

Jayapida was a great builder. In Srinagar he founded a Hindu shrine and put up a number of images, including three colossal images of the Buddha. He also built a vihara.

Like his grandfather he too founded a new town. Named after him Jayapidapura or Jayapura, it was not far from Parihasapora. The town which was built on the site of a lake after filling it has been located near the present-day village of Andarkot on the left bank of the Vitasta a little below Sumbal. Inside this town also he installed a number of sacred images including those of the Buddha. His wives and ministers also erected sacred buildings. Jayadatta, a minister built a *matha* or convent in Jayapura.

Jayapida who was himself a man of great learning extended his patronage to scholars and learned men.

He gathered a number of them at his court. These must have included some Buddhists. According to Nalinaksha Dutt* it was during his reign probably that Shantiprabha lived in Kashmir along with his disciples Punyakirti, Danshala, Visheshamitra, Prajnavarman and Shura.

Later in his reign Jayapida again went on a conquering expedition abroad. But this time a different fate lay in store for him. In Nepal which he invaded his army was cut to pieces and he himself was caught and thrown into prison. From here he was enabled to escape through the self-sacrifice of his devoted minister, Mitrasharman.

On return to Kashmir Jayapida subjected the people to heavy fiscal exactions. For three years he took the whole harvest. *Kayasthas* or officials confiscated the property of those who failed to pay. Not even Brahmans were spared and a large number of them lost their lives in hunger strikes held in protest. Though there is no specific mention of the harassment of Buddhists yet it seems unlikely that they could have escaped his oppression which was so widespread and all-embracing.

*See his introductory notes to *Gilgit Manuscripts, Vol. I.*

DEVOTIONALISM AND TANTRISM

In the time of the Karkotas, especially during the rule of the greatest of them, Lalitaditya, Buddhism witnessed another period of its glory in Kashmir. What with the presence of eminent bhikshus like Sarvajnamitra and the patronage extended to it by kings and their courtiers there was a great resurgence of the faith and large numbers of people were once again attracted to it. A large number of monasteries and stupas were put up. The flourishing condition of Buddhism in the Valley in the time of the Karkotas is borne out by the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims, Hiuen Tsang and Ou-Kong.

Hiuen Tsang was in Kashmir from May 631 to April 633 A.D. This corresponds to the close of the reign of Durlabhavardhana, the founder of the Karkota dynasty. Ou-Kong's visit fell in the second half of the eighth century towards the end of Lalitaditya's reign or shortly thereafter. Though Hiuen Tsang noted the number of Buddhist monasteries and stupas at about one hundred and of the monks at five thousand yet he complained of the declining influence of the faith. Ou-Kong found over three hundred monasteries and a

considerable number of stupas and sacred images. This clearly shows that in the intervening century and a quarter between the visits of the two Chinese pilgrims there had been a marked rise in the popularity of Buddhism.

Ou-Kong arrived in the Valley from Gandhara in 759 A.D. A layman, he had been sent to escort the ambassador from Kapisa* who had paid a visit to the Chinese capital. Of all the places that he visited in India, he stayed the longest in Kashmir. Ou-Kong was in Kashmir for over four years during which he studied many Buddhist works in Sanskrit and visited the various places of pilgrimage to pay his homage. In fact, he took the final vows of a Buddhist monk in Kashmir. He resided the longest at *Moung-ti-wei-houo-lo* which according to Stein corresponds to the vihara erected by Lalitaditya-Muktapida at Ushkar. He appears to have pursued his studies chiefly at this monastery. He specifically mentions that he studied the *Vinaya* of the Sarvastivadins here.

Two other viharas mentioned in Ou-Kong's *Itinerary* are *Ngo-mi-to-p'o-wan* and *Ki-chi*. These, according to Stein, correspond to the Amritabhavanavihara built by Meghavahana's queen in the vicinity of Srinagar and Krityashramavihara built by Jalauka near Baramulla. Ou-Kong also refers to the stupas built by Ashoka and the five hundred arhats who had come to Kashmir in his time.

*In the time of Hiuen Tsang Kapisa was the name of Kafiristan. Later it was sometimes used for Kashmir also. At the time of Ou-Kong's visit Gandhara and Udayana are stated to have been subject to Kapisa.

During Karkota times there was not only a big increase in the number of Buddhist shrines and monasteries in the Valley but there were certain developments of a far-reaching character in the faith itself. These were mainly in the direction of bringing it nearer to the various Hindu cults.

Mention has been made of the rise of what is known as the Mahayana and some of its high priests like Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Asanga. Like Shaivism and Vaishnavism, Buddhism had also developed a sacred pantheon to which were later added Tara, Sarasvati and other goddesses. About the beginning of the Karkota rule northern India contained many images of not only the divine Buddhas and Bodhisattvas but of many Buddhist goddesses to whom worship was paid by the faithful. One form this worship took was the composition and recitation of songs and hymns in their praise.

The first poems in praise of the Buddha were written by Ashvaghosha and the first hymns in praise of the Lord are ascribed to Matricheta who by some is regarded as identical with the former. According to another view Matricheta was a Kashmiri and a contemporary of Ashvaghosha. Still another view makes him a disciple of Nagarjuna's disciple Aryadeva.

Two of his poems discovered in Central Asia in recent times are the *Satpanchashataka-stotra* and the *Chatushataka-stotra*. The excellence of his poetical compositions can be seen from the following stanza*:

अहो संसारदौरात्म्यम् अहो निर्गुण सन्तता
नाथोऽपि सन तत्र गत् करुणात्मा त्वया सदृक

*Quoted in *India and Central Asia.*

नानागतभयम नोक्तम् नोक्तम न नेत्री न प्रवर्तिता ।
न संसारश्च गमितो नायपत्वम चतुर्विध: ।

Another Kashmiri who was a master writer of devotional poems lived in the Valley in the time of the Karkotas. He was Sarvajnamitra who lived in the Kayyavihara built in the time of Lalitaditya. He has been described as a nephew of the king of Kashmir by some and as his son-in-law by others. He had given away his all in charity and become a monk. He was so highly regarded in Kashmir that Kalhana compared him to the Buddha himself.

The best known of Sarvajnamitra's devotional poems is the *Sragdhara-stotra* written in praise of Tara. *Sragdhara* which means the bearer of a garland is an epithet of the goddess. Written in the *sragdhara* metre the poem represents her as a saviour and giver of strength to the weak and afflicted. Its recitation is considered very meritorious and as a safeguard against all evil. In another poem *Aryataranamashatottarashataka-stotra*, the poet mentions one hundred and eight names of the goddess.

An interesting legend has grown about the efficacy of the *Sragdhara-stotra.* According to it when Sarvajnamitra had given away all his treasure in charity he was approached by an indigent Brahman for money for the marriage of his daughter. The great Kashmiri bhikshu, therefore, sold himself to a king, "who had just instituted a great human sacrifice for which he was in need of a hundred men. But when the poet heard the laments of his brothers in sorrow with whom he was about to be sacrificed he sung his hymn to Tara and the goddess

descended and rescued the hundred victims condemned to death.*"

Needless to say, the legend can have no basis in truth as human sacrifices are not known to have taken place anywhere in Kashmir or the other parts of India in the eighth century when Sarvajnamitra lived. It seems to have been invented to demonstrate the potency of the *Sragdhara-stotra.*

A hundred and a thousand names of Tara are mentioned in another poetical composition, the *Brha-Nila-tantram* written by some other Kashmiri.

Sarvajnamitra is regarded as one of the principal originators of devotional poems known as *stotras* and *stavas* in Buddhism just as Asanga is credited with the introduction into it of the cult of yoga. The Yogachara system of Asanga is believed gradually to have led to the growth of *tantrism* in Buddhism.

Tantrism is usually regarded as belief in certain *mantras* (words or expressions possessing esoteric meanings) and meditational poses and practices for the attainment of the highest Truth. On a lower plane tantrism is regarded as belief in magic and sorcery and certain secret rites and rituals for the attainment of various ends—good and bad.

As pointed out by a contemporary writer,† a main peculiarity which distinguishes tantrism from the other living cults is "its personification of the dual aspects of the procreative forces in nature, the *shakta*

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*Vide: *History of Sanskrit Buddhism* by G.K. Nariman.

†Dr. W.Y. Evans-Wentz in his book *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation.*

representing the male (or positive) aspect and the *shakti* representing the female (or negative) aspect". He adds, "Unlike most other faiths, Tantrism teaches understanding and sublimation of the chief active force in humanity, namely, the reproductive force, and opposes the more prevalent and scientifically unsound teaching concerning the forcible suppression of it." According to this view, "sexual power must be complete and active, yet sublimated, and under as complete control as an aeroplane is by its pilot" to attain the bliss of *samadhi*.

Opinions differ about whether tantrism originated in Buddhism or Shaivism. Though it is generally held that tantrism first developed in Shaivism yet there are scholars who hold the opposite view. Be that as it may, Kashmiris whose motherland had long been the home of both the faiths were not slow in acquiring mastery in this new development.

That tantrism in a highly developed form prevailed in Kashmir is shown by the large number of *tantras* which in recent times have been collected by the second Dogra ruler, Maharaja Ranbir Singh and his sons. These include the *Brha-Nila-tantram*, the *Nirvana-tantra* and the *Tara-Rahasya*, all of them possibly Buddhist in origin. The *Brha-Nila-tantram* which later on received a Shaivite garb is addressed to Tara. In its existing form this tantra comprises twentyfour chapters in one of which is described the tantric worship of the Chinese. Kashmir is believed to have been one of the places where the *Kalachakra* system of tantrism was practised.

In the *Rajatarangini* itself we find mention, in Karkota times, of not only the great saint Sarvajnamitra but

also of the miracles performed by Lalitaditya's Chief Minister, Chankuna and others. Chankuna who was the brother of a famous magician in the land of the Tukharas is stated to have got the image of *Brha-Buddha* from his master in return for two spells or magical charms which, according to Kalhana, could check the flow of flooded rivers. Earlier the Kashmir historian ascribes the death of two Karkota rulers—Chandrapida and Tarapida—to sorcery. In later times Kashmiris had achieved such reputation in this field that Marco Polo credited them with "making their idols speak."

He believed that Kashmiris could, "by their sorceries bring on changes of weather and produce darkness and do a number of things so extraordinary that no one without seeing them would believe them." The celebrated Venetian traveller adds, "Indeed this country (Kashmir) is the very source from which idolatry (Buddhism) has spread abroad."

Kashmiri monks and scholars continued to visit foreign lands in the time of the Karkotas. Lalitaditya's extensive conquests and expeditions brought new lands within their ken and they went to them and to the other regions in greater numbers than before to teach and to preach. Ratna-Chinta, a Kashmiri monk, is, for example, known to have worked in China from 693 to 706 A.D. Besides translating *Ekakshara-dharani* and other texts, he is credited with the founding of a monastery there.

The growth of tantrism and devotionalism brought Buddhism very near to Shaivism as then prevalent in the Valley and the Buddhism which the Kashmiri monks thereafter gave to their northern neighbours may more

aptly be called Shiv-Buddhism; so greatly was it permeated with Shaiva practices and beliefs. Unmistakable evidence of this is to be found to this day in these regions, although Buddhism is no longer the prevailing faith in many of them.

Kashmiri monks and scholars did not carry their faith only to the countries which they visited. They carried their art, astrology, mathematics, medicine, music and dancing and some of their customs and superstitions like ancestor worship* also. Even the country's alphabet found its way into some of the neighbouring countries.

History has, however, had to record little about these great sons of Kashmir. Inspired with no modern motives of self-advertisement and publicity they left behind little about themselves. They desired nothing beyond the success of their endeavours. Like the other Indian monks and scholars of the time they went only to give and expected nothing in return. They had no hidden or ulterior motives and did not constitute the advance-guard of an enslaving imperialism.

They went to enlighten, to ennoble and to lead to salvation. Inevitably they very often commanded the highest respect of the people among whom they worked. They were provided with escorts by the rulers of the countries they visited. A Kashmiri Brahman who visited China in the second half of the seventh century at the request of the Chinese Emperor, is known to have been escorted back by the Chinese monk Hiuan-chao.

*Ancestor worship as practised in Kashmir, China and Japan shows remarkable similarities.

In fact it is because of the high esteem in which most of them were held in the countries where they worked that some details about them have come down to us. And now that we are free and our contacts with our northern neighbours are growing it is hoped that more and more information about these noble sons of the Valley will be forthcoming with the passage of time.

Perhaps the most celebrated monk to visit China in the eighth century A.D. was named Amoghavajra. His home is not definitely known though he is represented as belonging to northern India. Amoghavajra who was a great scholar is credited with a wider spreading of tantrism in China. He accompanied his guru, Vajrabodhi into China in 719 A.D. and after a visit to the mother country after the latter's death, he went back to China and translated a number of Sanskrit texts into Chinese. Another Kashmiri to visit China in the Tang period (618 to 907 A.D.) was named Prajnabala. Some of the Indian scholars who went to China at this time used to visit Kashmir first. There is mention of one Subhakarasimha starting for Kashmir before his visit to China. Subhakara who had been king of Orrissa reached Chang-an in 716 A.D.

One of the countries to which Buddhism spread for the first time in Karkota times was Tibet. Though it had long been surrounded by Buddhist countries Tibet knew little of Buddhism till about the middle of the seventh century A.D. The faith spread there for the first time in the reign of Sron-btsan-sgam-po who was a contemporary o Harshavardhana. Sron-btsan-sgam-po was a powerful prince who consolidated the various petty principalities into which Tibet was divided into a strong

kingdom and extended its frontiers to include Ladakh, Gilgit and Chinese Turkistan. His prowess is stated to have compelled the rulers of China and Nepal to seek alliances with him and to give him royal princesses in marriage. It was under the influence of these two Buddhist wives that the king adopted the Buddhist faith.

A few years before his marriage Sron-btsan-sgam-po had sent about a dozen and a half of his countrymen, headed by the brilliant Thon-mi Sambhota, to India for study so that they might acquire proficiency in Sanskrit and evolve a script for the Tibetan language.

Sambhota and his companions seem to have received their education in Kashmir or else they must have studied under capable Kashmiri teachers in some Indian Universities. Perhaps they did both. For the script which Sambhota invented on his return to his native-land was based on the script which was in use in Kashmir at that time. He also prepared a grammar which is stated* to be in use in Tibetan schools to this day.

Sambhota had brought a number of Sanskrit works with him. Later, at his suggestion the king invited a number of scholars from Nepal, China and India. These included two, Tabuta and Ganuta, from Kashmir† With the help of these scholars he translated a number of Sanskrit works into Tibetan. Among the eight works attributed to him are the *Karandavyuha* devoted to the exaltation of Avalokiteshvara and the

*In *The History and Culture of the Indian People Vol. III.*

†Rahul Sankrityayana mentions only one Kashmiri scholar named Tuna.

Mani-Kambum—a tantric treatise believed to have been revealed by the same god. The latter book also describes the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet as well as the origin of the well-known *mantra*, *Om Mani Padme Hum.** The work contains a hundred thousand precepts.

Sambhota is regarded as the author of that strict school of Buddhism which later on came to be known as the Yellow Sect.

Kashmir's influence was not confined to China, Tibet and Central Asia only. From these countries it travelled to their neighbours like Mongolia, Korea and Japan. While Kashmir's part in the propagation of Buddhism in Mongolia will be referred to in a subsequent chapter, it may be noted here in passing that the name of the Kusha† School of Japanese Buddhism, is derived from *Abhidharma Kosha* of Vasubandhu who had received his first lessons in *Abhidharma* in Kashmir. The Kusha School was introduced into Japan in the middle of the seventh century by Chitsu and Chitatsu, two Japanese disciples of Hiuen Tsang.† The famous Jojitsu School of Japan, introduced into that country by the Korean monk Ekwan, early in the seventh century is strongly influenced by the teachings of the Kashmiri scholar Harivarman whose *Tattvasiddhi* or *Satyasiddhi* was first translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva. Harivarman† lived in the later half of the third and the first half of the fourth century A.D. He sought to establish the original teaching of the Buddha. His views may be described as 'Hinayanist nihilism'.

*Vide: *Buddhism* by Monier Williams.

†Vide: *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy* by J. Takakusu.

BUDDHISM AND LATER HINDU RULERS

The later part of Jayapida's reign marks the beginning of the end of Karkota rule in Kashmir. Jayapida's successors of the Karkota dynasty proved to be worthless rulers or puppets. His son was a profligate prince who squandered away his father's riches. During his twelve years' rule the territories in the neighbourhood threw off Kashmir's yoke. Courtesans and moral degenerates were in high favour and learning was at a discount. Aged councillors were insulted and humiliated in open court by the king and his low-bred companions.

Avantivarman

Fortunately for the people of Kashmir its throne passed, in 855 A.D., into the hands of the virtuous Avantivarman who devoted himself heart and soul to the development of the country and the improvement of the condition of its people. The new ruler who belonged to a family of hereditary ministers distributed a large quantity of gold in charity at the time of his coronation. As he is one of the most catholic rulers that Kashmir

has ever known Buddhist priests and shrines must also have come in for their share of it.

During Avantivarman's time a large number of measures were adopted by his celebrated engineer Suyya to save the Valley from recurrent floods and vast tracts of cultivable land were reclaimed. These measures resulted in a great increase in food production and the prices of foodgrains came down to nearly one-seventh of what they used to be in times of great abundance even. In the general prosperity that thus came about the Buddhists shared equally with the followers of other faiths. The king and his devoted minister and kinsman Shuravarman gave themselves up to the building of pious foundations. In the new town Avantipora which he built on the right bank of the Vitasta at a distance of about eighteen miles from Srinagar he erected two marvellous temples* to Vishnu and Shiva.

There is, however, no mention of the erection of any Buddhist sacred buildings by the king who was a Vaishnava. But in recent times remains of a Buddhist stupa have been traced near the village Malangpura, three miles south-west of Avantipora.

Both Avantivarman and his minister were great patrons of learning. A galaxy of poets and scholars adorned his court. These included the well-known Sanskrit poets Shivasvamin, Ratnakara and Anandavardhana. There also lived a number of *siddhas*, *i.e.*, persons who had achieved spiritual perfection.

*The ruins of these temples are yet to be seen to the right of the Anantnag-Srinagar road.

In Avantivarman's time Kashmir witnessed a great rise in the popularity of Shaivism. This was due to the fact that some of the greatest philosophers of Kashmir Shaivism lived about this time. One of them, Bhatta Kallata is mentioned by Kalhana as living in Avantivarman's time. He was a disciple of Vasugupta who is now popularly regarded as the founder of Kashmir Shaivism. The fillip which Shaivism got as a result of the efforts and expositions of these great masters made it the foremost faith in the Valley for centuries to come and threw into shade both Vaishnavism and Buddhism. Hereafter Buddhism which had already developed some of the characteristics of Shaivism approximated more and more to it. In fact Brahman priests and Buddhist monks acquired mastery in the doctrines and practices of both Shaivism and Buddhism.

Avantivarman also prohibited the slaughter of animals in his kingdom. His pious engineer Suyya, who was also a Vaishnava, later issued a prohibition against the killing of fishes in the Vitasta. A similar prohibition against fishing in some of the springs in the Valley was issued in the fifteenth century by the great Muslim ruler, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin.

The process of disintegration which had started towards the end of Jayapida's reign was barely checked by Avantivarman. It started once again after his death. His son Shankaravarman who succeeded him was able to bring under his control some of the neighbouring territories which had thrown off Kashmir's yoke during the time of the weak rulers who followed Jayapida. But he too proved to be a great misfortune to his subjects. He instituted an oppressive system of fiscal

exactions and a cruel system of *begar* or forced labour. He resumed the lands belonging to various temples (these must have included some Buddhist shrines also) and on the pretext of supervision plundered sixtyfour temples through his officials specially appointed for the purpose.

Shankaravarman built a new city, Shankarapura, corresponding to the village Pattan on the Srinagar-Baramulla road. And for the erection of his temples there he removed everything of value from Parihasapora which had already suffered on account of Suyya having removed the confluence of the Vitasta and the Sindh about two miles away—from Trigrami near Parihasapora to its present site at Shadipore (ancient Shardapora).

For over two hundred years after Shankaravarman's death Kashmir witnessed misrule of a very bad type. The rulers had little use for principles and few scruples. Most of them were dissolute and tyrannical. Apart from indulgence in grossly sensual pleasures their one aim in life was to maintain themselves on the throne as long as they could. Their weak character and weaker administration led to the growth of powerful military clans known as the *Tantrin* and the *Ekangas*. These latter wielded great power and often the ruler and the councillors were just puppets in their hands. To win the support of these mercenaries no price was considered as too high. Kings, princes and councillors bestowed their treasures on them while their wives sometimes bartered away their honour also. In the process the mass of the people suffered greatly. For they were oppressed not only by the military gangs but had to meet the excessive demands of the king's functionaries to enable him to

make good what he had spent in securing the crown and to provide for the future when he might be called upon to outbid a rival.

A brief interlude in this misrule occurred between 939 and 948 A.D. when the Brahman Yashaskara was on the throne. He had been selected as king by an assembly of Brahmans called together for this specific purpose by the Commander-in-Chief who had driven out his predecessor. Yashaskara proved to be a good and just ruler. In his time the land became free from robbery and the rapacity of the officials. He built a monastery for students coming from Aryadesha (India).

Yashaskara's illegitimate son was killed by the wicked minister Parvagupta within a few months of his accession. The regicide then raised himself to the throne but he too was not destined to enjoy it for more than a year and a half.

Parvagupta's son and successor Kshemagupta was destined to rule for a longer span, from 950 to 958 A.D., during which Kashmir saw one of the worst periods of her history. There were few vices which this grossly sensual youth did not have. He was a merciless tyrant, a hardened drunkard and an unscrupulous gambler. His court was full of harlots, knaves, and depraved fellows. He earned lasting infamy by burning down the magnificent *Joyendravihara* erected in the time of Pravarasena. He got the noble edifice destroyed because a feudal lord had taken refuge in it to escape death at the hands of his assassins. The king's wrath was not appeased merely by reducing the vihara to ashes. He took the thirtysix villages belonging to it and granted them to a tributary chief. With the brass from the statue of the Buddha in this vihara and stones from

decaying temples he built a temple of his own in the capit.al Just before his death, however, he had two *mathas* (convents or monasteries) built at Huskapura.

Kshemagupta's reign is important in the history of Kashmir by reason of his marriage tc Didda, grand-daughter of Bhima, the Shahi ruler of Udhbanda. Didda, was a woman of the imperious type. She so dominated her husband in his lifetime that he was nick-named Diddakshema. Politically astute and morally loose, the charming Didda managed to maintain herself as the virtual ruler of Kashmir for close upon half a century.

After her husband's death, Didda acted as a regent to her young son Abhimanyu. There were a number of uprisings which she cleverly put down by bribing some and exterminating the other ringleaders. The king who was a consumptive died in 972 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Nandigupta.

Her son's death had a chastening effect on the queen for some time and at the suggestion of some pious coun-cillors she launched upon some philanthropic activity. To perpetuate the memory of her husband, her son and her own, she founded a number of temples and other sacred buildings. She is stated to have made sixtyfour foundations one of which, *Diddamatha*, has given its name Didamar to a locality in Srinagar (on the right bank of the Vitasta between the sixth and seventh bridges). She restored some of the ruined buildings and enclosed with stone walls almost all the temples whose walls had been burnt down. It is not unlikely that she repaired the *Jayendravihara* also. There is, however, specific mention of the erection of two viharas by her. One of these *Diddamatha*, has already been referred to above. The other appears to have been in

Lohara (Poonch). Both the viharas were meant to house Kashmiris and foreigners both. Valga the woman who carried the lame queen also built a matha known after her as the *Valgamatha*.

Within a year of her son's death Didda's lust for power reasserted itself and she destroyed 'through witchcraft' her grandson who had occupied the throne on the death of his father. Another grandson, who succeeded, was also disposed of by her in the same way. In the reign of her third grandson Bhimagupta she threw off all restraint in her personal conduct and openly made love to a letter-carrier named Tunga. Five years after Bhimagupta's accession she got him killed by torture and herself ascended the throne. There were uprisings and revolts but the combined intelligence and resources of the queen and her paramour were able to overcome them all successfully.

Didda died in 1003 A.D. and from her the rule of Kashmir passed to Sangramaraja, a scion of the ruling dynasty of Lohara or Poonch.

In Sangrama's time (1003 to 1020 A.D.) northern India witnessed a great calamity in the shape of Mahmud Ghazni's looting expeditions. The invader advanced to the very confines of Kashmir but was fortunately prevented from entering the Valley by its high mountain walls and an early fall of snow. A number of Shahi princes from the northwest of India who had fled from the onslaughts of Mahmud, however, took refuge in Kashmir and by their evil propensities and intrigues added to the hardships of the people and the difficulties of the rulers.

There is mention of the building of a matha and a vihara in the time of Sangramaraja. The matha was built by the princess royal and the vihara by a councillor.

About this time lived the prolific Kashmiri writer Kshemendra. He wrote a number of *Avadanas*, Buddhist legends resembling Brahmanic *Mahatmyas*.

The Shahi princes and noblemen enjoyed great influence in the time of Ananta (1028 to 1063 A.D.) and were a source of great oppression to the people. One of them, Anangapala, who was a favourite of the king was ever planning the breaking of the golden statues of the gods. Another, Rudrapala, patronised murderers and robbers. The Shahi noblemen drew high salaries and at one time Ananta was reduced to such straits that he had to pawn his diadem.

Ananta's pious wife Suryamati made a number of religious foundations and gifts. She founded mathas in the name of her two brothers and husband. She was, however, too fond of her son Kalasa and made the weak Ananta abdicate in his favour.

Kalasa (1063 to 1089 A.D.) proved to be no better than his father. But for a brief spell of good administration during which he made some endowments his rule was also beset with the same difficulties and evils that characterised the reigns of some of his predecessors. He was also a profligate prince and had as many as seventytwo women in his seraglio. Most of these had been procured by a Muslim attendant of his who hailed from the Punjab. Kalasa confiscated the villages which formed the endowments of some temples. He also appropriated the brass images of a number of Buddhist viharas. But in his own town Jayavana (Zevan) he is stated to have erected a number of sacred buildings.

Kalasa's son Harsha was an accomplished prince endowed with many qualities. But a curious transformation seems to have come over him later in his

reign when he developed Nero-like propensities. His love of pomp and show and his extravagant expenditure on his troops and favourites led him into financial difficulties. To overcome these he took resort to the despoilation of temples, both Hindu and Buddhist. Kalhana says: "There was not one temple in a village, town or in the city which was not despoiled of its images by that Turushka, King Harsa". Of the chief divine images only four were spared. Two of these were Hindu, one in the capital and the other at Martand. The other two were colossal statues of the Buddha which were saved by opportune requests addressed to the king at a time when he was bestowing favours. One of these Buddha images, which was in the city (Srinagar) was spared at the request of the Buddhist *shramana*, Kushalashri and the other which was in Parihasapora, at the request of the singer Kanaka, Kalhana's uncle. According to Taranatha three distinguished teachers of Buddhism, Sakyamati, Shilabhadra and Yashomitra lived in Kashmir in his time. The last-mentioned is stated to have written a commentary or Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosha*.

After great oppression and tyranny, during which the country was also visited by a terrible famine, Kashmir was relieved of this maniac in 1101 A.D. by the followers of Uchchala who succeeded him.

Uchchala (1101–1111 A.D.) was on the whole a capable and energetic ruler. He tried to win over the people by munificent gifts to Brahmans and the restoration of ruined religious buildings. But he too was not destined to remain on the throne for long. He was assassinated by his enemies after a rule of about eleven years.

After four months of Uchchala's death the throne of Kashmir passed into the hands of his brother Sussala. Sussala's fifteen years' rule was characterised by a succession of internal troubles caused by the uprisings of the powerful *Damaras* (feudal lords) and the pretender Bhikshachara who claimed the throne on the ground of his being a grandson of Harsha. On his assassination in 1128 A.D. he was succeeded by his son Jayasimha.

Jayasimha

In the time of Jayasimha (1128—1154 A.D.) Buddhism in Kashmir once again received a fillip. Jayasimha proved to be a capable ruler who gave to his country much needed peace and good government. By cleverly overcoming the powerful barons he ushered in a period of great prosperity during which the country was able to recover from the wounds inflicted on it in the time of his unworthy predecessors. Kalhana says that in spite of floods and premature snowfalls there was a sufficiency of food in the country and the people once again celebrated all the great festivals; the king sharing his treasure with them on such occasions.

Jayasimha was endowed with many good qualities. Politically astute and morally sound, he showed proper regard and consideration to all his loyal subjects. While he was respectful towards the learned and the spiritually advanced he was kind and considerate to the poor and the needy. In his time the capital city which had suffered terribly through fire and disturbances during the time of his predecessors was built anew. For this purpose he permitted the free use of timber in the forests. The king himself restored and repaired the ruined temples and mathas and made permanent endoments for

them. He endowed scholars and learned men richly and built houses for them and their offspring.

The king, the queen and the ministers vied with one another in the erection of sacred buildings. In the new town Jayasimhapura (Simpor village situated about five miles to the southeast of Srinagar) Jayasimha built a splendid matha or monastery excelling all the others and endowed it with many villages. His pious wife Ratnadevi made a number of sacred foundations in different towns. The vihara which she built in the town Ratnapura was known as the *Vaikunthamatha*.

A large number of shrines and mathas were built by his ministers Rilhana, Dhanya, Jalha, Alamkara, Bhuta and Mankhaka. Udaya, the Commander-in-Chief constructed a number of sacred buildings, including a splendid matha on the shore of the Volur (Wular) Lake. His brother Shringara built a matha, a garden and a tank along the eastern shore of the Dal Lake. Udaya's wife Chinta built a vihara with five chapels on the right bank of the Vitasta. Kalhana bestows high praise on the minister Bhuta who founded the town of Bhuttapura full of viharas and other buildings. The town which has not been identified so far was perhaps in the north of the present-day Srinagar at the foot of the Hari Parbat hill. He seems to have given his name to Bota-kol (Bhuta's stream going from Nagin Lake to Anchar Lake) and the bridge Bota-kadal over it. Alamkara built a number of sacred buildings, bridges and *snanakoshtas* (bathing huts).

Rilhana's saintly wife Sussala built afresh the well-known *Chankunavihara* of which nothing but the name was in existence. Kalhana says that her vihara made the city a joy to look at. A number of structures were

raised alongside the vihara. These were intended as residences for students and monks both. After her death her husband Rilhana constructed a vihara in her honour. Another minister Dhanya also founded a vihara known as *Bijjavihara* after his deceased wife.

The settled conditions and prosperity which Jayasimha was able to bring about in his kingdom brought back to it some of its former glory. It once again came to enjoy the respect of its neighbours who sent ambassadors to Srinagar. Among the ambassadors at Jayasimha's court are mentioned two from as far away as Kanauj and Konkan.

Most unfortunately for the country the peace and prosperity which Jayasimha had brought about through great prudence and patient endeavour did not long survive his death. With it the land reverted to the chronic state of decrepitude which had been its lot previous to his reign. For nearly two centuries after him till the rise of Muslim rule we come across no ruler strong or wise enough to consolidate his kingdom.

Jayasimha's Successors

Most of Jayasimha's successors proved to be worthless as rulers. Four of them who came immediately after him, including his son, were downright idiots. The next ruler Jayadeva (1198—1213 A.D.) rooted out many evil laws of the country. But the selfish ministers did not allow him to continue on the throne for long and he was expelled. One of the ministers Gunarahula appears to have been a Buddhist. He joined his master in his exile and persuaded him to return. With Gunarahula's assistance Jayadeva was able to recover his kingdom. But soon after the good king was poisoned by an unscrupulous noble who feigned friendship for him.

In the time of Jayadeva's son Rajadeva (1213–1236 A.D.), the lord of Lahara or Lar, named Baladhya Chandra, built in the city a matha known after him as the *Baladhyamatha*. Sangramadeva (1236–1252 A.D.) who followed constructed a big building with twenty-one rooms for Brahmans. The wife of his son and successor Ramadeva (1252–1273 A.D.) built on the bank of the Vitasta, near the present-day Habbakadal, a splendid matha known after her as *Samudramatha*. Another matha by its side was built by Mahila, the stainless queen of the next ruler Lakshmanadeva (1273–1286 A.D.) who was murdered by Kajjala, a Turushka from outside. A matha was raised by the next ruler Simhadeva also.

Kashmir was the victim of a ruthless invasion in the time of Simhadeva's successor Suhadeva (1301–1320 A.D.). The invader Dulcha, Chief Commander of the ruler of Kandahar according to Abul Fazl, came with a large force and plundered and ravaged the fair Valley for a number of months. When at last he decided to leave—through fear of the approaching winter–he carried away with him, besides the booty he had collected, all the strong men in the Valley. Nemesis, however, overtook him on the way and he perished, along with his army, in the snows while trying to cross the frontiers of Kashmir. But in the words of the Kashmir historian, Jonaraja, he left Kashmir 'almost like a region before the creation, a vast field with few men, without food and full of grass' in which 'the son found not his father, nor the father the son, nor did brothers meet their brothers'*.

*Vide : *Kings of Kashmira* by J.C. Dutt.

It was in this state of chaos and confusion when the people's morale had been completely shattered that an adventurous Bhautta or Ladakhi prince Rinchana decided to occupy the Kashmir throne. Rinchana who had fled from his native place following the assassination of his father, had made his appearance on the borders of the Valley while it was subjected to the ruthless oppression of Dulcha. With his departure he set out for the capital. He had expected little resistance. But the commander-in-chief Ramachandra opposed him at every step. He therefore took resort to a mean strategem and killed the patriotic Kashmiri commander. Thereupon the worthless Suhadeva left the city in fear and Rinchana set himself up as ruler in his place. He also took the queen, Kotadevi, as his wife.

Rinchana (1320–1323 A.D.) was an astute prince. Though probably a Buddhist, he sought, for political reasons, admission into the Brahmanical fold. But the Brahman guru whom he approached for the purpose did not agree to do so. Thereafter popular tradition credits the exasperated Rinchana with having embraced Islam. But this is very doubtful. In any case, Rinchana was very friendly towards Shahmira who like him had come to Kashmir from outside and had taken up service under Suhadeva. Shahmira had won the usurper's confidence and favour by remaining neutral when a section of powerful nobles rose in revolt against him.

On Rinchana's death the Kashmir throne was occupied by Udayanadeva, a scion of the old ruling dynasty. He also married the twice-widowed queen Kota.

Udayanadeva (1323—1338 A.D.) was a shameless coward who fled from his kingdom when another invader Achala appeared on its borders. When the invader had been cleverly sent away by the wise queen, the chicken-hearted Udayanadeva returned.

Kotadevi

Kotadevi herself ascended the throne on the death of Udayanadeva in 1338 A.D. But this last Hindu ruler of ancient Kashmir was not destined to enjoy it for long. She began well and with the assistance of her wise and loyal minister, Bhikshana, brought back prosperity to the country. Bhikshana's rise to power was not liked by the other minister Shahmira who killed him by resort to a mean strategem. The queen wanted to punish Shahmira for this foul deed but was prevented from doing so by the other 'evil minded' ministers. Later when she went to Jayapura on some business the influential Shahmira who, ever since his arrival in Kashmir, had been planning to get its throne, 'possessed himself of the capital'. He then sent her messengers proposing that they would conjointly share the throne. The queen was won over by his assiduity but Shahmira did not remain true to his word and put her and her two sons—one of them by Rinchana—into prison.

CHAPTER XIV

KASHMIR'S CONTRIBUTION TO BUDDHISM IN TIBET

Hindu rule in Kashmir began to decline soon after the death of Avantivarman (855 A.D.). Although between that time and the death of Kotadevi, the last Hindu ruler, we come across no ruler who professed the Buddhist faith, yet it was subjected to no particular discrimination or disability *vis-a-vis* Hinduism. The treatment which the two faiths received at the hands of the various rulers in this long interval of about four and a half centuries was almost the same. Kings who showed little regard for the shrines of one are not known for their solicitude for those of the other. On the contrary, the rulers such as Didda and Jayasimha or their consorts and councillors who made foundations or constructed buildings for followers of one faith did so for those of the other also.

While many of the rulers and their favourites were busy in their lewd pleasures and intrigues, the common people continued to live in peace and amity. The resurgence of Shaivism and the development of many

Shaivite traits in Buddhism had brought the followers of the two faiths closer together than even before. The same households often contained members of both the faiths, just as their ascetics sometimes lived in the same matha or monastery. It is significant that in this period we come across a large number of religious foundations which were not ear-marked for members of anyone faith particularly.

Despite political disintegration in this period, Kashmir continued to be a great seat of learning, as of old. As a matter of fact, a number of Kashmir's most eminent philosophers, poets, critics and scholars lived during these times. They belonged to both the faiths and learnt from one another. Thus the great Shaiva philosopher, poet and critic, Abhinavagupta is known to have studied under some Buddhist teachers also. The writings of the philosophers and scholars of the time were not confined to their faith only. Kshemaraja, a pupil of Abhinavagupta wrote the *Buddhavilasa*. Kshemendra, another versatile Hindu writer and his son Somendra or Somadeva who flourished in the eleventh century also wrote on Buddhist subjects. Kshemendra's work *Bodhisattavadanakalpalatta* contains one hundred and seven tales to which the one hundred and eighth and an introduction were added by Somendra. The work enjoys high repute in Tibet where it is stated to have been translated in the twelfth century. According to another version it was translated about 1272 A.D. under the auspices of the Mongol Emperor, Kublai Khan.*

*See Maurice Winternitz's *History of Indian Literature Vol. II.*

Since there was no longer scope for missionary work in the northern and north-western regions where Islam held sway, eminent Buddhist scholars and monks from Kashmir now went to the eastern and south-eastern regions only.

Mention has already been made of the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet in the time of the Karkotas and Kashmiri influence on the great Thonmi Sambbota who invented the Tibetan script on the basis of the script which was in use in Kashmir at that time. Tibet was then ruled by Sron-btsan-sgam-po.

For about a hundred years after the death of Sron-btsan Buddhism made little headway in Tibet. But in the time of his fourth successor, Khri-sron-lde-btsan who ruled about the middle of the eighth century, the faith received a great fillip. This powerful ruler born of a Chinese Buddhist mother invited to his country from Nalanda, the well-known Buddhist teacher Shantarakshita. A Kashmiri monk, Ananta who was already working in Tibet then, acted as the interpreter between the king and his Indian guru.

Shantarakshita did not have much success in Tibet to begin with. As a matter of fact he had to leave the country for some time on account of the hostility of the followers of the ancient *Bon* faith (a kind of demon worship) who interpreted some natural calamities at that time as a consequence of his perverse teachings. He, however, returned later but still he was not able to make much impression on the people. He, therefore, got from Budh Gaya his brother-in-law, the great tantric Buddhist, Padma Sambhava.

Padma Sambhava who was a native of Udayana* made a tremendous impression on the people most of whom believed in primitive magic and sorcery. He was successful not merely in establishing Buddhism on a sound footing but became the chief patron-saint of Tibet. He is now regarded as the founder of the Red Hat Sect in Tibet and Ladakh.

About the end of the eighth century Padma Sambhava procured several Buddhist texts from Kashmir and for translating them he employed a number of monks at the Bsam-yas monastery (situated about forty miles from Lhasa) which he had himself set up. According to the Tibetan biography of Padma Sambhava by his chief Tibetan disciple, Yeshey-Tshogyal, Padma Sambhava was in Kashmir for five years during which he converted many demonesses.†

Under the influence of Shantarakshita and Padma Sambhava the pious Tibetan king erected a number of monasteries. A number of Buddhist works were translated into the native language. Kashmiri scholars known to have worked in Tibet at this time are Ananta and Shantigarbha. They were assisted by Tibetan novices (*Lo-cha-va* in Tibetan).

Buddhism in Tibet received a further accession of strength in the time of the next two rulers, both sons of Khri-sron-lde-btsan. The elder of them named Mu-ne-btsan-po out-did his predecessors in his patronage

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*Udayana is generally equated with the Swat Valley on India's north-west. But J. Denikar and Monier Williams have equated it with Dardistan in Kashmir State.

†See *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation.*

of the faith and its monks. He ordained that the wealth of the country should be shared equally by all. Thrice he had the wealth of the country distributed equally. This greatly upset his relations who got him poisoned through his mother. The younger brother, Khri-lde-btsan-po who was also a staunch Buddhist got the first Sanskrit-Tibetan dictionary prepared and standardised the work of translations. It is said that more works were translated in his regime than at any time previously. Kashmiri monks who prepared translations of new works or revised the earlier ones in accordance with the rules and principles now set down, are Jinamitra, Dhanashila and Ananda or Ananta. They were assisted by Tibetan novices, headed by Vairochana*. According to J. Takakusu, Jinamitra translated Vasubandhu's monumental work *Abhidharma-kosha* into Tibetan. These monks worked in the next regime also when perhaps the *Vinaya* was translated into Tibetan. This was accomplished by two monks, one of them Sarvajnadeva being a Kashmiri. In Tibetan the *Vinaya* is called *Dulva*.

Khri-lde-btsan-po was followed by his younger son Ral-pa-chen who carried on the good work of furthering the cause of Buddhism with great zeal and devotion. But he was murdered at the early age of forty-eight by a supporter of his elder brother Glan-darma whom he had superseded in accordance with the dictates of their father. Glan-darma had been deprived of the throne on account of his hostility to Buddhism. And when at last he succeeded in getting it, he laid a heavy hand on the Buddhist monasteries and monks. His triumph

*Vide: *Buddhism of Tibet* by L. A. Waddell.

was, however, shortlived as he was murdered by a Buddhist monk only about three years after his accession.

Curiously enough Glan-darma's ruthless suppression of Buddhism led to its ultimate victory in Tibet. For after his death the Buddhist clergy became very powerful, thus leading to the gradual disintegration and final extinction of monarchical rule in this northern kingdom.

Glan-darma's successors proved to be weak rulers during whose time many parts of Tibet became independent. His great-grandson Ne-ma-gon who was forced to leave Lhasa early in the tenth century set himself up as an independent ruler in Western Tibet. At his death his dominion which he had enlarged by the addition of Purang, Ladakh and Guge was divided among his three sons. The eldest son of the one who got Guge was named Hkhor-lde. He renounced his territory in favour of a younger brother and himself became a monk, known as Yeshes-hod or Gyanaprabha.

Gyanaprabha who a staunch Buddhist was distressed to find that the faith followed by his countrymen was not the pure Buddhism preached by its early apostles. He felt that many undesirable and unauthorised practices had grown up in it and the way the monks lived and worked also left much to be desired. To restore the faith to its pristine glory he, therefore, decided to send a number of his countrymen to Kashmir which was then regarded as a great seat of Buddhist learning. Accordingly he selected a batch of twenty-one intelligent youngmen and after educating them for some years in Tibet sent them to Kashmir for higher

studies. Only two of them Rin-chan-zang-po (Ratna-bhadra or Rahulabhadra) and Legs-pahi-shes-rab (Suprajna) were, however, destined to return; others perished due to the rigours of the journey or from some illness or the other in Kashmir.

During his ten years' stay in Kashmir Ratnabhadra acquired mastery over Sanskrit and studied sacred texts with the masters there. On return to his mother-land he translated a number of outstanding Buddhist texts into the native language. These included some high philosophical works by such eminent people as Nagarjuna, Aryadeva and Vasubandhu.

In this good work Ratnabhadra is known to have been assisted by Pandit Shradhakarvarma, Padmakar-gupta, Buddha Shrishanta, Buddhapala, and Kamala-gupta. Some of these, if not all of them, must have been Kashmiris. It appears that since the great Tibetan scholar had lost nearly a dozen and a half of his companions in or on the way to Kashmir, he persuaded some of his Kashmiri friends and fellow-students to go with him to his native land so that they might render him assistance in his work of translating the Indian Buddhist classics into Tibetan.

Ratnabhadra is credited with the erection of a number of temples in Ladakh, Guge and Spiti. According to Tripitakacharya Rahul Sankrityayana two of them are yet to be found at Sumda and Alchi in Ladakh. The temple walls were beautifully painted, most probably by artists from Ladakh and Kashmir. Earlier a temple is believed to have been built in Skardu by Khri-lde-btsan-po.

Gyanaprabha's devotion to Buddhism was indeed very great. He had not only given up his kingdom for it but towards the evening of his life he lost his personal liberty also for the same.

This was when he was in another part of the country to collect gold to enable a second party of Tibetans to be sent to the famous Vikramashila University in Magadha to persuade Acharya Dipankara Shrijnana to visit Tibet; the party sent earlier having failed in its mission. Gyanaprabha was put under arrest by the ruler of the territory and was held up to a big ransom. When his son came to know about it he came with gold to secure his release but his father counselled him not to bother about him but to spend the gold on getting the celebrated Bengali monk to Tibet.

Dipankara Shrijnana, also known as Atisha, ultimately went to Tibet though Gyanaprabha was no longer alive.

Atisha's knowledge of Tibetan being elementary, his activities in Tibet would not have been successful if he had not had available to him the assistance of Ratnabhadra who had acquired command over Sanskrit in Kashmir. This greatest of Tibet's Sanskrit scholars was at first disdainful towards the distinguished visitor but gradually he was attracted by his scholarship and nobility and co-operated with him whole-heartedly in the translation of sacred texts and other work in the furtherance of the cause of Buddhism. A Kashmiri scholar named Subhati Shri Shanti was also of much help to Atisha during his stay in Tibet. According to

Sir Charles Bell*, Subhati's name invariably crops up in religious discussions in Tibet to this day, when he is referred to as the great Kashmiri Pandit.

Sometime before Dipankara's arrival in Tibet another great Kashmiri, Pandit Somnath had gone there, possibly through Ladakh. He was an outstanding astrologer of his time and translated the *Kala-Chakra-Jyotisha* into Tibetan. Significantly enough the Tibetan calendar starts from the year of his arrival in that country, *viz.*, 1027 A.D. The Tibetan cycle of reckoning time is of sixty years' duration as in Ladakh. In Ladakh the people also use the 12-year cycle for common computations, such as a person's age or the date of a recent event, but according to Sir Alexander Cunningham† the 60-year cycle is a "much more elaborate reckoning". Thus it will be seen that in addition to much of Buddhism, Tibet got its alphabet and calendar also from Kashmir. The current year (1956 A.D.) is the thirtieth year of the seventeenth cycle of the Tibetan calendar. The Tibetan New Year falls in mid-winter, as in Ladakh.

Ratnabhadra is not the only Tibetan who came to Kashmir for higher studies. Another Tibetan monk who did so was Nrong or Blo-ldan-shes-rab. He had been sent by the grandson of Gyanaprabha's nephew, Che-lde who ruled about the middle of the eleventh century.

Fortunately some details are available‡ about Nrong's stay in Kashmir. It is, for example, known

*Author of *The Religion of Tibet.*

†Author of *Ladak.*

‡Vide: *Tibet main Bodh-Dharma* by Rahul Sankrityayana.

that he read *Nayaya* or dialectics with Parhitabhadra and Bhaviraj and the Yogachara with Brahman, Sajjan, and Amargomi. Bhaviraj lived at Anupnagar (Srinagar?) and Chakradarpur, then looked upon as the residence of *siddhas* (those who achieve spiritual perfection). It was here that the Tibetan aspirant for knowledge translated Dharmakirti's well-known work *Pramanavartika* into his native tongue. The work had earlier been translated by Subhati Shri Shanti. Later Nrong translated two more works of the celebrated dialectian. He studied in Kashmir for seventeen years after which he went to his homeland. Possibly he too persuaded some Kashmiri scholars to go with him to Tibet for some of his assistants in Tibet bear names which have a close resemblance to those prevalent in Kashmir at that time.

It is not unlikely that some of the adventurous Kashmiri bhikshus and scholars who went to Tibet in these times, later found their way into China. Chinese sources mention two Kashmiri monks (named Tien-si-tasi and Mu-lo-shi-ki in Chinese) as working in China towards the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh. But unfortunately their original names are not known.

Probably the last great Tibetan scholar to visit Kashmir was Ne-ma-gra-gas or Ravikirti. He was born in the middle of the eleventh century when the great Ratnabhadra passed away. He studied in Kashmir for twentythree years. He is credited with having translated some philosophical works by Aryadeva, Chandrakirti and Purnavardhana. Among his assistants in this work was one Kanakvarma from Kashmir,

From the large number of Kashmiris mentioned above it should not be assumed that monks and scholars from the Valley went to Tibet because, being a comparatively untutored and backward country then, it was easy to establish one's superiority there. Such base ideas never crossed their minds. Their only aim was to render assistance and to those that needed it the most. No attempt was made by them to impose their culture on the people among whom they worked. On the contrary, they helped them to develop according to their own lights. Their high scholarship and knowledge is amply borne out by the fact that some of them who found their way to the Universities of Vikramaṣhila and Nalanda in Magadha, came to occupy some of the highest places in these great seats of learning in the East.

Vikramashila became the most important seat of learning in India towards the middle of the eleventh century. A number of Kashmiris are known to have been its teachers when it was at the height of its glory. One of them was Smrtyakara* Siddha. He was a contemporary of Dipankara Shrijnana and like him was considered among its eight great Pandits. Monks from Kashmir and Ladakh were among the students at the University. In fact when the second delegation from Tibet came to the University to persuade Dipankara Shrijnana to visit that country, it was a Ladakhi bhikshu named Tson-sen who advised them as to how they should approach the great Pandit to secure his consent. (Tson-sen hailed from Ghia, the highest village in the Upshi Valley and the last in Ladakh, on the way to Kulu).

*2500 *Years of Buddhism*

One of the great Pandits of Vikramashila at the beginning of the eleventh century was a Kashmiri named Ratnavajra*. Another great Kashmiri, Sakya Shri Bhadra was at its head when at the close of the twelfth century this great seat of learning and culture in the East was destroyed by Bhaktiar Khilji. This calamitous occurrence took place when Shri Jayadeva was ruling in Kashmir. His minister Gunarahula, it has been noted, was also a Buddhist.

Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayana has given† a few details about Sakya Shri Bhadra, also known as Sakya Shri Pandita. This great son of Kashmir was born in 1127 A.D. He received *dikhsha* or initiation at the hands of Sukh Shri and studied under a number of learned teachers including Ravigupta, Chandragupta, Vinaya Shri, Ravi Shri Gyan, Abhayakirti and Vikhyatadeva. Sakya Shri Bhadra grew up to be one of the most learned men of his time and it was but natural that he should have been attracted by the great seats of learning in Magadha where he rose to be the ruler's guru and became the principal High Priest or Vice-Chancellor of the Vikramashila University.

When the great University was destroyed Sakya Shri Bhadra and his colleagues went to Bengal. Later, perhaps when Bengal itself was invaded, they went to Nepal at the instance of a Nepali friend. From Nepal the great Kashmiri Pandit went to Tibet at the invitation of Hkhro-phu.

Hkhro-phu belonged to the Sa-skya monastery in Tibet which had been put up by a pious Tibetan in 1073

*Vide: *The History and Culture of the Indian People. Vol. IV.*

†Vide: his *Tibet main Bodh-Dharma*

A.D. Though it had a modest beginning, the monastery was destined to play a prominent part in the spread of Tibetan Buddhism or *Lamaism*. Its High Priests came to wield great influence in China and Mongolia.

Before inviting Sakya Shri Bhadra into his country, Hkhro-phu had brought another Kashmiri Pandit, Buddha Shri, and in collaboration with him had translated the *Prajna-pradeepika*.

Sakya Shri Bhadra is believed to have spent ten years in Tibet. Unlike the other Indian *acharyas*, he did not busy himself with translation work. On the contrary he spent his time in delivering lectures, as at the University of Vikramashila. These pious discourses won him the respect and allegiance of large numbers of people who became his disciples. The priests of the Sa-skya monastery who were included among these, studied a number of high philosophical works under him. Sakya Shri Pandita's association with the Sa-skya monastery and the learning and scholarship which its lamas picked up under him made it the foremost monastery in Tibet for many years to come during which its fame spread far beyond the confines of Tibet. His influence on the priests of the monastery was so great that its Head Lama came to be known Sa-skya Pandit or Sakya Pandit after him.

Sakya Shri Bhadra remained in Tibet for ten years at the end of which he returned to his motherland. Here, according to Rahul Sankrityayana, he died in 1225 A.D. at the ripe old age of ninetyeight.

Among the original works ascribed to Sakya Shri Bhadra is the *Mahayana-upadesha-gatha*.

Towards the close of the twelfth century considerable portions of Chinese territory passed under the control of the Mongol Emperor, Chenghiz Khan. And in the beginning of the thirteenth century (1207 A.D.) he had succeeded in establishing control over most of Tibet also. This provided the Tibetan lamas, especially those of the Sa-skya monastery, an opportunity for spreading the faith among the conquerors. It is not unlikely that Sakya Shri Bhadra who was in Tibet when it passed under Mongolian subjection was the inspiration behind this move and it is also possible that some Kashmiri monks too might have played their part in this noble work.

The Head Lama of the Sa-skya monastery who was the chief disciple of Sakya Shri Bhadra is stated to have sent preachers to Mongolia. Later, in 1243 A.D. he sent his two nephews including Phags-pa, who was to succeed him after his death. The Head Lama named Kun-dghal-ma-chen himself went there in 1246 A.D. The Mongol Emperor at that time was Godan Khan. He became his disciple in 1247 A.D. and bestowed certain parts of Tibet on him.

After Kuṅ-dghal-ma-chen, his nephew Phags-pa, also known as Matidhvaja, became the guru of the next and the greatest Mongol Emperor, Kublai Khan. Phags-pa (excellent lama) was invested with the sovereignty of Tibet by his royal disciple. He was also recognised as Head of the Buddhist Church throughout Kublai's vast Empire. Phags-pa invented a script for the Mongolian language. But this had only a limited success and was finally replaced by the present Mongol

script based on the one invented by his uncle and predecessor on the basis of Tibetan. The Tibetan script and alphabet, it has already been noted, were themselves based on the Kashmiri script and alphabet of about the seventh century A.D.

The high place which Kashmir enjoyed in the eyes of the Tibetans and their neighbours at that time is clear from the fact that the celebrated Venetian traveller, Morco Polo learnt from the Mongols and the lamas with whom he came into contact that they regarded Kashmir as 'the very original source from which their religion spread abroad.' Sir Henry Yule writes*, "The Kashmirian conjurers(tantric experts) had made a great impression on Morco, who had seen them at the Court of the Great Khan." From them and from the Tibetans he learnt that there "are a number of idolatrous (Buddhist) abbeys and monasteries in Kashmir." Also he came to know that "the people of this province (Kashmir) do not kill animals nor spill blood, so if they want to eat meat they get the Saracens who dwell among them to play the butcher." About their ascetics he learnt that "they observe strict chastity, and keep from all sin forbidden in their law."

Sa-skya monastery which came to enjoy a high status mainly because of its association with Sakya Shri Bhadra is important in the Buddhist history of Kashmir for another reason also. That is because two eminent Tibetan lamas, Bu-ston (1290–1364 A.D.) and Taranatha, (born 1375 A.D.), who have left us a lot of information

*Vide: his *Morco Polo*.

about Buddhism in Kashmir and Kashmiris in Tibet, were intimately connected with it. Kashmiri scholars worked in Tibet in their time also and there is mention of a Kashmiri, named Suman Shri, who assisted Tibetans in translating Kalidasa's *Meghadoot* about the beginning of the fourteenth century.

BUDDHISM AND MUSLIM RULERS

The accession of Shahmira in 1339 A.D. marks the beginning of Muslim rule in Kashmir. But in its earlier stages the change in the rulership meant little change in the life of the people; their religion, culture or language. The first four Muslim rulers were tolerant princes under whom the traditional practices of the land continued to be observed by the people. There was not much marked change in the policy of the administration and Hindus continued to occupy high places in the government. Sanskrit, corrupted, by an admixture of Arabic and Persian words, continued to be the court language and people were free to pursue the religion of their choice.

Shahmira's son and successor, Ala-ud-Din (1342-1354 A.D.), who shifted his capital to Jayapura,(the town built by Jayapida), built in Rinchana's town—Rinchanapura—an edifice called *Buddhagriha*. This edifice which has left its name to a quarter of Srinagar, (Buddhagira on the right bank of the Vitasta near the fifth bridge), was probably meant for the Buddhists—possibly those coming from Ladakh. About this time

lived the famous Shaiva philosopher and poet Lal Ded or Laleshvari.

Ala-ud-Din's son and successor, Shahab-ud-Din was a powerful ruler who made his authority felt far beyond the confines of Kashmir. His elder queen is stated to have been offered to him in marriage by the ruler of Sind, Govind Khana. Shahab-ud-Din, who ruled from 1354 to 1373 A.D., had high regard for the religious susceptibilities of his subjects. Jonaraja has an interesting story to relate in this behalf. Once when the king's young wife Lasa suspected that her rival, the elder queen, had asked the minister Udayashri to employ magic against him, the king decided to demonstrate to her that the minister would not do so as he had little regard for his gods. He, therefore, sent for him and feigning financial difficulties suggested that the way out was to mint the metal of a Hindu image into coins. The irreligious minister did not only welcome the idea but he went one better and suggested the more massive image of the *Brha-Buddha* for the purpose. This convinced the young queen that no harm could accrue to her lord through the impious minister. Shahab-ud-Din then privately reprimanded the wicked minister in these words: "Past generations have set up images to obtain fame and merit and you propose to demolish them". On hearing this Udayashri's head bent down in shame.

Qutab-ud-Din (1373–1389 A.D.) who followed Shahab-ud-Din upheld the traditions of his illustrious predecessor. Jonaraja says that when the king saw that the people died of famine every year "he performed a *yagna* in the month of Bhadra (Bhadoon) and distributed large gifts"*.

* "*Kings of Kashmira*" by J.C. Dutt.

In the time of the next two rulers, Sikander (1389-1413 A.D.) and Ali Shah (1413–1420 A.D.), the non-Muslim faiths in the Valley received the severest blows. Qutub-ud-Din's son and successor, Sikandar was a bountiful ruler. His charity attracted to Kashmir large numbers of Muslims from outside.

Jonaraja says : "As the wind destroys the trees, and the locusts the *Shali* (paddy)crop, so did the *Yavanas* (Muslims) destroy the usages of Kashmir"*. Not only that. Under their influence and at the instigation of his minister, Suhabhat, who had renounced his ancestral faith, "the king took delight, day and night, in breaking the sacred images. There was no city, no town, no village, no wood, where the temples of the gods were left unbroken. After destroying their gods and temples the wicked minister (who after conversion was known as Saif-ud-din) set about destroying the caste of the people*".

Ali Shah who succeeded Sikander was a mere boy when he ascended the throne on the death of his father. Saif-ud-din who was the Chief Minister had, therefore, a free hand in the administration. He intensified his persecution of non-Muslims. Heavy fines were imposed on those of them who held fast to their faith. He forbade their ceremonies and processions and suspecting that they would run away from his tyranny to other countries he ordered the guards on the roads not to allow passage to anyone without a written passport. Then he tormented them. They were given the alternatives of death or conversion. Many must have succumbed and abjured their faith but there were large numbers who became martyrs to it. Jonaraja says that the Brahmans burnt themselves, killed themselves by poison, by rope, or by drowning or by throwing

Kings of Kashmira

themselves from precipices. Of those who tried to run away through the byroads, many perished in the way due to difficulties. Some feigned acceptance of Islam and wandered about in the country wearing the dress of the Muslims. After oppressing the non-Muslims and reviling their *shastras* for nearly four years in Ali's time, the tyrant Saif-ud-din died of consumption from which he had been suffering.

The rise of Mahayana and the growth of tantrism had brought Buddhism very near to Shaivism. The Buddha himself had been accepted into the Hindu pantheon as an incarnation of Vishnu. Buddhism, on its part, had developed a sacred pantheon full of gods and goddess analogous to those of the Shaivas and other Hindu sects. With the resurgence of Shaivism in Kashmir from the eighth century onwards, there was not much perceptible difference between the followers of the two faiths. As already pointed out, among the laity the same household would often contain followers of the two faiths living side by side in goodwill and amity. Inside monasteries and temples also Hindu sadhus and Buddhist shramanas were living side by side. That is why in the times following those of the Karkotas, kings, queens and nobles erected a large number of mathas without assigning them exclusively for members of any one faith only. While in the beginning of Muslim rule in Kashmir, Hindus and Buddhists were free to profess their respective faiths, we have seen how much they suffered in the time of Sikander and his eldest son Ali. The extent of the persecution and oppression to which the followers of the non-Muslim faiths were subjected will be seen from the fact that popular tradition—exaggerated perhaps—holds that only eleven Hindu families were left living in Kashmir when Ali's younger brother, Zain-ul-Abidin assumed the throne.

It is wrong to assume, as is sometimes done, that Buddhism had become extinct in Kashmir before the advent of Muslim rule. No doubt with the resurgence of Shaivism, Buddhism had suffered a decline but it was by no means extinct.

That Buddhism had not become extinct in Kashmir before the advent of Islam is clear from the fact that a number of early Muslim rulers and their nobles constructed a number of religious buildings, including some viharas for the Buddhists.

Even after the large scale conversion of the non-Muslim population of Kashmir to Islam in the time of Sikander and Ali we find mention of Buddhists living in Kashmir. In fact some of them like Tilakacharya occupied high places in the time of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin who followed Ali.

Zain-ul-Abidin

Zain-ul-Abidin, who ruled for half a century from 1420 to 1470 A.D., is the greatest indigenous Muslim ruler of Kashmir. So far as tolerance and catholicism go, he is perhaps the greatest ruler that has ever ruled India or any part of it. Fittingly enough the people of Kashmir have bestowed on him the title of *Badshah* or the Great King.

Zain-ul-Abidin was a model ruler. Jonaraja calls him sinless. He seems to have made it his life's mission to redress the wrongs and heal the wounds which had been inflicted on the non-Muslims during the reigns of his father and brother.

The king did not brook any inequality in administration and abolished all evil laws and practices of his predecessors. Nobody now dared to maltreat a non-

Muslim. For if any one had the audacity to do so, he was promptly and properly punished. The destruction of the sacred books of the non-Muslims was forthwith stopped and non-Mulsims who had left the Valley were invited back to their homes. In this new atmosphere of peace and tolerance not only did many of them return but those who had disguised themselves as Muslims threw of the mask. As their religious books had been destroyed, their noble ruler got fresh copies of the same for them from outside. Schools were opened for their children and free kitchens run for widows and orphans. The *jizya* or poll tax on the non-Muslims was abolished and the ban on the erection of sacred buildings was removed. Sacrifices and pilgrimages were once again permitted. In order to encourage the non-Muslims in an unfettered observance of the rites and ceremonies enjoined upon them by their faiths and to deter the mischief mongers from harassing them, the king himself went to some of the Hindu shrines and built monasteries. Though a devout Muslim he acquired a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit and spent part of the time he could spare from the cares of administration in the study of sacred books in that language. He got a number of Sanskrit works, including the *Rajatarangini*, translated into Persian for the benefit of his Muslim subjects.

Merit and not creed or religious affiliation was the criterion for appointments to high offices under him. According to Jonaraja, the Buddhist Tilakacharya was placed in the highest position, *i.e.*, he was made the Chief Minister. Other non-Muslim councillors of the king included the Chief Justice, Shribatta; the astrologers Rupabhatta and Simha; the scientist, Ramananda; the

wit, Buddhabhatta and the physician, Karpurabhatta. The last two again seem to have been Buddhists. Shribhatta, also known as Shivabhatta, was a physician who had cured the enlightened ruler of a dangerous boil. In fact it is said that at the beginning of his reign when Zain-ul-Abidin got this boil nobody could be found in the realm who could cure it. No capable physician was available for the job. At last Shribhatta was found and he cured him completely. The grateful king asked him to name whatever reward he would like to have. The great Pandit said that he wanted nothing for himself but wanted mercy for his brethren. Thereafter the king is stated to have become particularly kind to the terror-stricken non-Muslims.

Shribhatta and the other ministers built a number of mathas and other sacred buildings in various localities. So did the king. In his own town Zainanagri to the north of present-day Srinagar, he erected a number of mathas and endowed them with rent-free lands. In the other towns too he constructed new buildings and repaired old ones. Shrivara who has chronicled the events of his reign after Jonaraja says that for the benefit of the poor the king got an extensive vihara built on the bank of the Vitasta near its confluence with the Mar canal. (Their confluence was then near the present-day Habba-kadal.) There was a vihara on the other side of the river also and the Kashmir historian describes them as the 'centre-jewels amidst the jewel-like houses of the two cities'.* Like Ashoka, Zain-ul-Abidin also had rest-houses built on the principal roads for the convenience of travellers.

*Kings of Kashmira.

The king who had spent part of his youth at Khorasan had friendly relations with its ruler and the rulers of Egypt and Iran. His relations with the Emperor at Delhi and some other Indian chiefs were also good. During his time Kashmir troops led by his son invaded the frontier regions, possibly Dras and Kargil, wherefrom they brought some prisoners.

Zain-ul-Abidin's policy of tolerance and brotherhood had a good effect on his immediate successors. His son Haider (1470–1472 A.D.), though the antithesis of his father in many respects, also spent nights "in listening to the *Puranas*, the *Dharmashastras* and the *Samhitas*".* In his time, however, images were removed from some temples and some leading non-Muslims, including one named Buddha, were cruelly tortured.

Hasan Shah (1472–1484 A.D.), who succeeded the voluptuary Haider, was a great improvement on his predecessor. He renewed the laws of his grandfather which had fallen into disuse during the short reign of his father. Shrivara says that a *homa* or *yagna* was performed on the occasion of his coronation. He adds that the king learnt the six schools of Hindu philosophy and built a matha on the road to Kheri (Khrew). The queen, Bhomarkhotan, built a new matha in Zainapuri while the other queen, Hayat Khotan, repaired an old one that had been burnt. Following the example of their parents, the three princes also had mathas and other religious buildings built in different localities.

Hasan Shah's ministers also patronised the non-Muslim faiths. Malik Ahmed, the chief of them, is stated to have 'used his wealth in building new mathas

and endowing villages in favour of Brahmans.'* Around Diddamatha he erected rows of beautiful buildings. Another noble, Tazibhat built a matha in Zainanagri. The barbar Phirathakura who also held a high office under Hasan Shah built a beautiful matha at Bijbihara. Two other nobles Edarajanaka and Suyyabhandapati erected viharas, one of them at Bijbihara.

After Hasan Shah's death Kashmir relapsed into that chronic state of decrepitude and disorder which had characterised it in the time of most of the later Hindu rulers. The power of the rulers of the dynasty founded by Shahmira had begun to decline with the death of Zain-ul-Abidin but after Hasan Shah's death the Shahmiri rulers were mere puppets, "set up, pulled down and set up again by factions and powerful nobles" supported by their clansmen. The two factions were those of the Sayyids and the Madras or Magres. So great was their animosity that once—in the time of Mohammed Khan who succeeded Hasan Shah—when the Sayyids burnt the Diddamatha, their rivals returned the compliment by setting fire to their town Alavapura (or Alauddinpura).

The Shahmiri Sultans were followed, about 1556 A.D., by the turbulent Chaks, a tribe which originally came from the north of Kashmir, probably Dardistan. But conditions in their time were little better than in the weak regimes of the later rulers of the former ruling dynasty. In fact in the century between the death of Hasan Shah and the annexation of Kashmir by the Moghuls, the Valley saw one of the darkest periods in her history, during which not only were the Hindus

*Kings of Kashmira

the object of persecution now and then but the two principal Muslim sects—the Sunnis and the Shias—were often at loggerheads with one another. It was again during this period that the Valley was virtually ruled for about a decade (1540—51 A.D.) by Mirza Haider Dughlat, a daring adventurer from Kashgar. Both Hindus and Shias suffered under him while under the Chaks it was the Hindus and the Sunnis. The celebrated Samudramatha was consumed by a sudden fire in the time of one of the last Chak rulers.

A brief reference has already been made to the part played by Kashmiri scholars and monks in carrying their country's art, astrology, music, etc., to their northern neighbours. But it would be wrong to assume that this commerce of culture was a one-sided affair. Kashmir too profited much from her contacts with her neighbours. For when the Kashmiri monks returned from there or monks from these countries visited the Valley, they brought many new things and ideas with them. Unmistakable evidence of Gandharan influence on the ancient sculpture and architecture of Kashmir exists to this day. The peach and the pear which are so common in Kashmir now are known to have been brought by the Kushans. Silk, vermilion, fireworks, tea and *samavar* (peculiar tea-kettle with furnace inside) also appear to have come to us from our neighbours in the north. In Muslim times when the local population had been depleted due to a number of causes, both Zain-ul-Abidin and Mirza Haider are known to have introduced many crafts and industries from Central Asian countries and Iran. Zain-ul-Abidin was a great lover of music and musicians from Iran, Samarkand,

Tashkand, Kabul, Punjab and Delhi flocked to his court. One of the visiting musicians is stated to have presented a copy of the *Sangeetachudamani* to him. Music was in great demand in Mirza Haider's time also and we learn from Abul Fazl that he "introduced varieties of musical instruments". Chinaware and porcelain also acquired vogue in the Valley in Muslim times.

FROM MOGHUL TO PRESENT TIMES

Kashmir became part of the Moghul Empire in 1586 A.D. in the time of Akbar. The great Emperor who paid three visits to the Valley, once again inaugurated an era of secularism and prosperity. Shuka who has written an account of his regime in Kashmir says that he abolished the various taxes which had been levied on the Hindus in the time of the Chaks. A proclamation was issued to the effect that houses of those who took the annual tribute from the Hindus would be instantly pulled down. The bountiful Emperor gave much in charity to the Brahmans and bestowed villages on them.

But we come across no mention of Buddhism or Buddhists in the Valley in the time of Akbar and his successors. Obviously the Buddhists had ceased to be a separate sect in Kashmir and were looked upon as part and parcel of the small number of Hindus that remained there. But they continued to have Buddhist names. The Kashmir historian Shuka's father was, for example, named Buddhayasharaja. The non-Muslims of Kashmir at that time also were known for the Buddhist virtues of tolerance, *ahimsa* and celibacy. Abul Fazl who has left a description of the Kashmir

of Akbar's time in his well-known book, *Ain-i-Akbari*, says: "The most respectable class in this country (Kashmir) is that of the Brahmans, who are true worshippers. They do not loosen the tongue of calumny against those not of their faith, nor beg, nor importune. They employ themselves in planting fruit trees, and are generally a source of benefit to the people. They abstain from flesh meat and do not marry."*

About two centuries earlier Morco Polo also complimented ascetics of Kashmir for observing 'strict chastity' and for keeping from all sin 'forbidden in their Law'. And so far as the people were concerned, he found that they did not kill animals or spill blood.

The Moghul period was on the whole a period of peace and prosperity for the people of Kashmir and in the time of Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jehan they enjoyed religious freedom also. But in the time of the Shahani Durani, Kashmiris were subjected to the worst rule that the Valley has ever witnessed. Kashmir passed into their hands when it was captured by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1752 A.D.

Writing about the transition from the Moghul to the Pathan rule, Sir Walter Lawrence observes†, "When, however, we pass from the Moghul period to the period of the Shahani Durani, we pass to a time of brutal tyranny, unrelieved by good works, chivalry and honour. Men with interest were appointed as governors, who wrung as much money as they could out of the wretched people of the Valley." Hindus were once again persecuted and the poll-tax on them revived. Muslims also suffered greatly.

About the advent of the Sikh rule in 1819, Sir Walter

*Jarrett's translation.

†In *The Valley of Kashmir*.

says, "It must have been an intense relief to all classes in Kashmir to see the downfall of the evil rule of the Pathans, and to none was the relief greater than to the peasants, who had been cruelly fleeced by the rapacious *sirdars* of Kabul. I do not mean to suggest that the Sikh rule was benign or good, but it was at any rate better than that of the Pathans."

During Sikh rule the Hindus of Kashmir no longer apprehended persecution on the ground of their religious belief. Their condition, on the other hand, was somewhat better than that of their Muslim countrymen.

Sikh rule in Kashmir came to an end in 1846 when, on the defeat of the Sikhs in the Punjab, Kashmir was made over to Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu. About Dogra rule in Kashmir, Sir Walter Lawrence, writing towards the end of the last century, observes, "It is difficult to realise the change which has come over Kashmir in the short period of Dogra rule—a period of less than fifty years. Anarchy and constant warfare have been succeeded by peace and the annual inroads of foreign troops, who pillaged the country and rendered the forlorn condition of the Kashmiris more and and more desperate, has given place to the welcome invasion of European visitors........".

Before acquiring the Valley of Kashmir, Gulab Singh had conquered Ladakh and Baltistan. This once again brought the people of Kashmir into intimate contact with Buddhists and their faith; but of that later. Meanwhile, we may pause to consider what influence Buddhism has had on the followers of the other faiths prevalent in the Valley.

CHAPTER XVII

BUDDHIST INFLUENCE IN KASHMIR

Roughly speaking, Buddhism as a distinct faith ceased to exist in Kashmir from the close of the fifteenth century. From that time onwards we find no mention of the erection of viharas, etc., or of Buddhists inhabiting the Valley. The exodus of large numbers of non-Muslims and the large-scale conversion to Islam of those that remained in the time of Sikandar and other fanatical Muslim rulers left few Hindus and fewer Buddhists living in Kashmir. And the suffering undergone in common brought those that held fast to their faith in spite of tremendous odds, so near to each other that in the course of time the followers of the two faiths became indistinguishable.

We have already noticed how the process of the two faiths coming nearer to each other started with the rise of the Mahayana. It received a powerful impetus with the growth of devotionalism or *bhakti* and tantrism in Buddhism also. With the appearance of gods and goddesses like Avalokiteshvara and Tara, many metaphysical ideas and theistic concepts associated with Shiva and his consort or the other Brahmanical gods and

goddesses had been transferred to Buddhism and it was, therefore, but natural for the two to coalesce under stress of common adversity. That, at any rate, is what happened in the Valley.

The peaceful co-existence of the two faiths, Hinduism and Buddhism, for centuries made for the development of many common traits and ideals. These included *parikrama* or circumambulation of shrines, the use of the rosary with one hundred and eight beads and worship of sacred footprints* (of the Buddha and Vishnu), sacred trees and sacred symbols and diagrams like the *Chakra*, the *Swastika*, etc.

The use of the rosary is no longer confined to Buddhist monks and Hindu sadhus only. Holy men of other faiths also make use of it. And so far as circumambulation of shrines is concerned it continues to be a favourite practice with the Hindus in the Valley. In fact the more devout among them believe that greater merit accrues if the *parikrama* of shrines like Hari Parbat is performed barefooted or in severe weather conditions such as the bitter cold and frost of mid-winter.

An eminent authority on Buddhism has pointed out how some Buddhist monks would occasionally submit themselves to great physical torture in the performance of the *parikrama* of their shrines. They would lie flat on the ground and cover the whole distance by measuring the length of their fully extended bodies on it. The whole process would be completed at one time and the devotee would not allow himself any rest,

*The Kaunsarnag Lake on the mountains to the west of the Valley is also known as *Vishnu-pad*. The lake is in the shape of a footprint. The supposed footprints of Vishnu are to be found in certain other localities in Kashmir.

even for taking some nourishment. Within living memory, there have been a few cases in which Hindu ascetics in Kashmir performed the *parikrama* of certain well-known shrines similarly. Just a few years ago, a south Indian sadhu* went round the Hari Parbat hill in Srinagar (a distance of about three miles) on knees and elbows. On another occasion he covered the entire distance by rolling himself on the ground. In another case, a local devotee† covered the distance by repeatedly measuring the length of his fully stretched body on the ground.

As Buddhism did not object to its followers offering worship to Hindu gods, the Hindus also found a place for the Buddha in their sacred pantheon. In fact worship of the Buddha is enjoined upon the Hindus of Kashmir in the *Nilamatapuranam*, a sacred text which lists the places of pilgrimage in ancient Kashmir and describes the rites and ceremonies which people were to observe. The relevant passage in that book is given below:

विष्णुर्देवो जगन्नाथः प्राप्ते ब्रह्मण कलौ युगे ।
अष्टाविंशतिमे भावी बुद्धो नाम जगद्गुरू ।।
पुष्ययुक्ते निशानाथे वैशाखे मासि काश्यप ।
तस्मात् कालात् प्रथारभ्य काले भाविष्यतः परम् ।।
शुक्ले सम्पूजनं तस्य यथा कार्यं तथा शृणु ।
सर्वौषधैः सर्वरत्नैः सर्वगन्धैस्तथैव च ।।
बुद्धार्चास्नापनं कार्यं शाक्यो क्तैर्वाणैस्तथा ।
सुधासिताश्च कर्तव्याः शाक्यावासाः प्रयत्नतः ।।
कचिच्चित्रयुताः कार्यश्चैत्या देवगृहास्तथा ।
उत्सवं च तथा कार्यं नटनर्तकसंकुलम् ।।
शाक्यानां पूजनं कार्यं चीवराहारपुस्तकैः ।
सर्वमेतद् भवेत् कार्यं यावत् प्राप्ता भवेन मघा ।।

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*Swami Raghvanand
†Shri Premnath Durani

It will be seen from the above that the birthday of the Buddha was to be observed on the *Vaishakha Poornima*, the full-moon day in May. On that day the Buddha's image was to be installed in chaityas and temples after bathing it in scented water rendered holy with different herbs (*aushadhis*) and jewels (*ratnas*). Thereafter, worship was to be offered to it in accordance with the instructions of the Sakyas or Buddhists. On this occasion the walls of the temples and the chaityas were to be decorated with paintings and people were to dance and sing. Also gifts of food, clothes, cows, books, etc., were to be made to the Buddhists.

The Buddha is not regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu in the *Nilamatapuranam* only. As late as the eleventh century A.D. Kshemendra's *Dashavataracharita* also mentions him as an incarnation of the Hindu god. The Hindus of Kashmir did not only adopt the Buddha as one of their gods. Traces of the best in the Buddhist *Vinaya* (discipline) and *Abhidharma* (metaphysics) may easily be seen in the *Trika* philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism. In one of his poems Kshemendra says that "no genuine follower of *Trika* should have any quarrel with another system of thought and worship." Some of the Buddhist tantras like the *Brha-Nila-tantram* (addressed to the Buddhist goddess Tara) were later given a Hindu garb.

Buddhist influence on the people of Kashmir dates back to the times when the faith flourished in the Valley. Unmistakable evidence of the profound influence which Buddhism has had on the people in the Valley exists to this day. It is not unlikely that the *ashtamivrata*, the fast observed on the eighth day of the lunar half of every

month, which continues to be observed by many Hindus in Kashmir to this day had a Buddhist origin. The *ashtamivrata-vidhana* contains the ritual which was to be observed on the eighth day of each *paksha* or fortnight. "The rite entails the drawing of mystic diagrams....oblations not only to the Buddha and the Bodhisattava but also to the Shaivitie deities"*. Also, even now when *homa* is performed in our Hindu homes offerings are made not only to the gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon but also to the *Tri-Ratna* (The Three Jewels—the Buddha, the Sangha and the Law) and the Buddhist goddesses: Tara, Sutara, Varahi, Marichi, Lochana, Pandaravasini, Vidyarajni, Vasundhara, Prajnaparamita, Moharatri, Ragaratri, and Vajraratri. These goddesses find a place of honour in the various *stotras* and *stavas* which are daily recited in the Hindu homes and temples of Kashmir. In the *Bhavani-shasranamamstotra*, for example, we find mention of the following Buddhist goddesses Prajna-paramita, Tara, Buddhamata, Jineshvari, Vigrahasta and Lochana.

The enlightened philosophy of the Buddha has not been without its impact on the non-Hindus of Kashmir. We have seen how some of the Muslim rulers and their nobles erected mathas and viharas. Sir Wolseley Haig says† that Zain-ul-Abidin "shared Akbar's scruples with regard to the taking of life; forbade hunting; and abstained from flesh during the month of *Ramazan*."

Reference has already been made to the great Kashmiri ruler's prohibition against the killing of fishes and birds in some springs and lakes in the Valley.

***Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism.*

†Vide: *Cambridge History of India*.

Even now some Muslims in the Valley abstain from meat on the occasion of the anniversaries of some of their saints popularly known as *rishis*. And there are some scholars who are disposed to regard the Order of the *rishis* as a descendant of the Buddhist Sangha or the Brotherhood of Buddhist monks. These *rishis* or *fakirs* also do not marry and devote themselves to piety and meditation. The junior ones in the Order go about like the Buddhist bhikshus* to collect alms.

The influence of Buddhist *dharanis*—mystical formulas possessing magical powers—can be traced in the use of amulets and charms so common in Kashmir even now. These are worn to attain various ends and as a protection against illness, etc. Similarly, the Buddhist practice of relic worship has not died out. Every year lakhs of Hindus and Muslims pay homage to their respective sacred relics enshrined at different places in the Valley.

Buddhist influence on the art and architecture of Kashmir has also been considerable. This is seen as much in the painted scrolls presented to their *jajmans* to this day by the Brahman priests on *Gauritritiya* (the third day of the bright half of *Magh*) and *Navreh* (New Year Day) as in the sculpture and remains of the ancient buildings in the Valley.

Image making and painting in Kashmir, as in many other regions, are a legacy of Buddhism. The practice of preparing images of the gods and goddesses seems to have begun with the introduction of *terracotta* figures

*According to Monier Williams and Henry Yule the term *bakshi* derived from the word *bhikshu*. The terms *bakshi* and *baksh* are widely used among people on India's north west.

in the time of the Kushans. Clay images* of various Shaivite deities continue to be made for worship in Hindu homes in Kashmir to this day on *Poornamashi* and *Amavasya*—the last day respectively of the bright half and the dark half of the month. Excellent and large-sized images of these deities are prepared on the occasion of big *havans* and *yagnas*. But these images are not preserved beyond the duration of the sacrificial ceremony.

The art of painting has long been practised in Kashmir and in olden days Kashmiris seem to have acquired great mastery in it. We have seen above how the *Nilamatapuranam* enjoined upon the people to decorate the walls of temples and chaityas with beautiful paintings on the auspicious occasion of the Buddha's birthday. In the eleventh century, Somendra, son of the great Kashmiri polyhistor Kshemendra, who completed his father's *Bodhisattvavadanakalpalata* by writing the one hundred and eighth tale with an introduction refers in the latter to the pictures in beautiful colours on the walls of the monasteries.

One contemporary Kashmiri writer says, "On the walls of the Bota Masjid which lies below the castle hill of Srinagar the pictures of Buddhist saints are to be found which are hidden by whitewash. This Masjid was formerly a Buddhist temple".

Though little patronised the indigenous school of painting is not yet dead. Two most outstanding painters

*One of the best makers of clay images in Srinagar at present is named Pandit Shura Chhama. He is a painter also.

†P.N. Bazaz in his book *The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir.*

of Kashmir in recent times are the late Pt. Naran Murtgar and Pt. Makeshvar Nath Koul.

Buddhist influence on the ancient temples and the early mosques of Kashmir has not been inconsiderable. According to Kak, the Hindu temple of the best period was, in broad outline, "a chaitya built in the middle of a monastic courtyard."* Dr. Mohi-Din Sufi† similarly holds the view that "the outside appearance of most of the present-day Muslim shrines (in Kashmir) is not unlike that of Buddhist *pagodas* though all details are entirely Saracenic". The pagoda style of building with super-imposed roofs is itself regarded as Indian in origin. A number of buildings, including some well-known mosques in the Valley, yet have superimposed roofs.

Buddhist influence on the Hindus of Kashmir is still so great that only about a year ago when they built a new stone staircase to the shrine of *Shri Chakra*, popularly known as *Chakreshvar* on the Hari Parbat Hill, they built over it a gate which is modelled on the gates at Sanchi. Many Hindu men and women yet bear names like Bodha (Buddha), Tara and Sangh. Gautama also appears to have been a popular name and a spring in the vicinity of Anantnag is even now known as *Gautamnag*, after a sage named Gautama.

Last but not least, strong Buddhist influence on the people of the Valley may be seen in the qualities of tolerance, fellow-feeling, mercy and charity which still form the distinguishing features of the character of a Kashmiri.

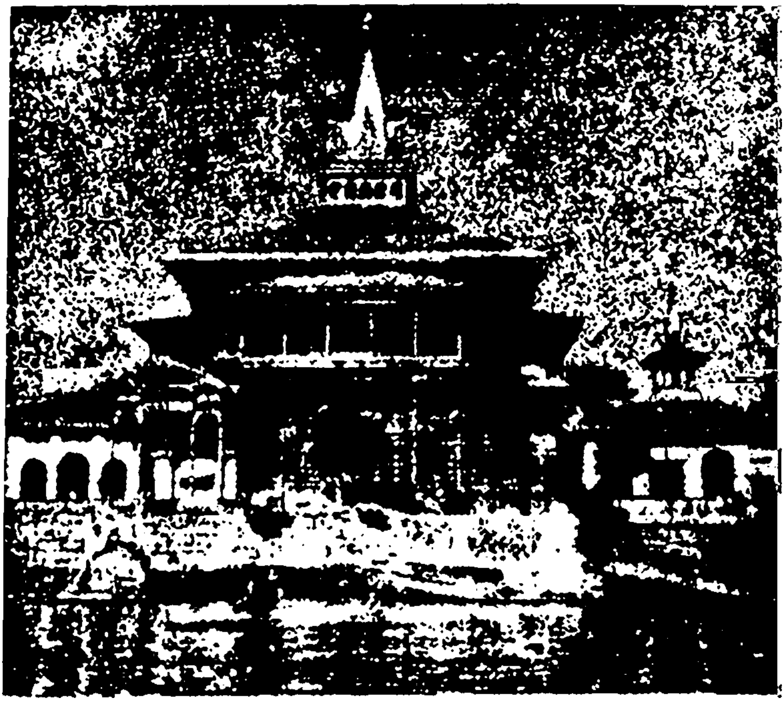
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* *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir.*

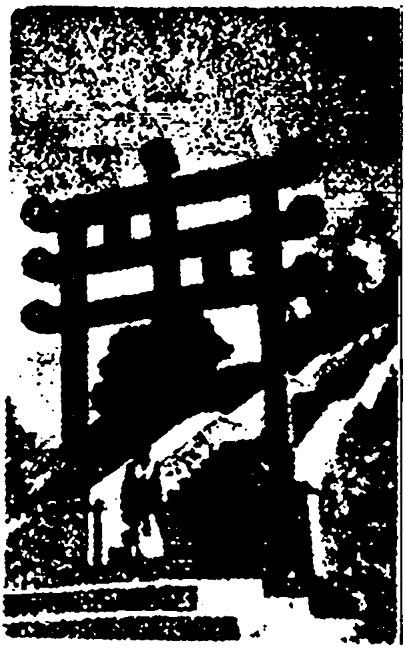
† See his *Kasheer.*



Buddhist image from Parihasapora



Shah Hamdan mosque in Srinagar



Gate over stone staircase leading to Chakreshvar shrine on Hari Parbat Hill

BUDDHISM IN LADAKH

LADAKH—THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Ladakh, the one big region in India where Buddhism is professed by the people to this day, has till recently been almost a forgotten land, except by daring mountaineers and adventurous explorers and the slow-winding *caravans* on the Central Asian trade route. "Ladakh, in Tibetan *La-tags*, is the most common name; but is also called *Mar-yul* or Low-land or Red-land and *Kha-chan-pa* or Snowland*". Fa-Hien called it *Kia-chha* and Hiuen Tsang *Ma-lo-pho*.

Shrouded in a mist of myth and mystery, this land of monks and monasteries rises gracefully from the upper half of the Indus basin. Enclosed within the Western Himalayas and the Karakoram mountains, it embraces the headwaters of the Indus over a distance of about three hundred miles. It has Tibet in the east and Kashmir in the west. In the south it is bounded by the districts of Spiti and Lahul, (Panjab), which once belonged to it, while towards its north, beyond the Karakoram mountains, lie the Chinese districts of Yarkand, Kashgar and Khotan. The north-western portion of

*Vide: *Ladak* by Alexander Cunningham.

Ladakh district is known as Skardu or Baltistan and beyond it lie Chilas, Darel, Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar, Punial, Ishkoman, Yagistan and Chitral.

The territory presents an extremely desolated and barren aspect. Seen from the air it appears to be a succession of dreary wastes and bleak mountains tapering in a number of snow-capped peaks. But a closer view reveals some fertile tracts also, mainly along the river banks.

The district of Ladakh comprises the three *tehsils* of Leh or Ladakh, Kargil and Skardu—the last-mentioned as also the other areas to its west, including Gilgit, are now under the unlawful occupation of Pakistan. Ladakh proper includes the more populous areas around Leh, Nubra in the north and north-west, the lofty upland of Rupshu or Rukchu (over 15,000 ft. high) to the east, Zanskar to the south and south-west and beyond it the western areas of Kargil, Suru and Dras on the high-road to Kashmir. Ladakh Tehsil has an area of nearly 30,000 square miles and a population of about 45,000 only.

Ladakh is one of the most elevated regions in the world with people living at elevations from 9,000 to about 15,000 feet above the sea. Many of the mountain peaks in or around Ladakh are well over 24,000 feet in height. These include Nanga Parbat (26,629 ft.), Gasharbrum (26,470 ft.), Masharbrum (25,600 ft.) and Mt. Godwin Austin or K2 (28,265 ft.).

Ladakh suffers from a climate of extremes. In spite of its high altitude the days in summer are very hot—on account of its vast arid tracts and bare mountain ridges. In winter it is very cold, with icy winds

blowing in from the neighbouring snowclad mountains. Rainfall is scanty—about 4 inches in the year—and the climate extremely dry. This makes vegetation sparse and scarce and agriculture difficult.

Though Nature has not been kind to them yet the Ladakhis are a cheerful and long-lived people. They are very fond of dancing and *chang*, a kind of intoxicating beer prepared locally. Even the smallest event is for them an occasion for mirth and gaiety. They are one of the friendliest people on earth and their hospitality is proverbial.

Ladakh is inhabited by a peculiar people who call themselves *Bot-pas*. In Kashmir they have long been known as *Bhauttas* or *Botas* and their land as *Botun*. They belong to the same racial stock as the Tibetans and closely resemble them in features. Though not particularly handsome their honest ways and cheerful disposition endear them to all who come into contact with them.

Their religion, Buddhism has conferred upon them many virtues. These include honesty, truthfulness, tolerance and kind heartedness. Crime is practically non-existent in Ladakh. Murder and assault are virtually unknown and thefts are rare. The Ladakhis will not even touch what belongs not to them. Another matter in which these simple, peace-loving people are a model is the way in which they live in peace and amity with their neighbours despite differences in religious faith. Religion with them is a private affair, as indeed it should be. Inter-marriages in families of rival creeds have not been uncommon in Ladakh and Muslims are known to have been appointed to

important administrative offices in the Buddhist monasteries.

Curiously enough the Ladakhis do not inter-marry with the Mons, a small sect of people believed to be descended from the missionaries who first preached the Buddhist faith in the country. According to another view they are the descendants of the original inhabitants of the territory. At present the Mons are either carpenters or minstrels and drummers. Most probably they are rated low socially because of being musical performers. Till very recently musical performers were not highly regarded socially in Kashmir and certain other parts of India.

Though from the close of the Karkota rule in Kashmir the Ladakhis have looked to Lhasa for spiritual guidance, yet they have much in common with the people inhabiting the Valley. In fact Buddhism itself went to Ladakh from Kashmir.

Their language Bodhi is closely allied to Tibetan, but its script is more akin to Devanagri than to any other script. And as has already been pointed out the Tibetan character is a modified form of Devanagri which was introduced into that country from Kashmir in the seventh century A.D.

Printing has long been known in Ladakh. About fifty years ago, when most people in Kashmir were quite unaware of what a newspaper was, Ladakh had a newspaper published in the Bodhi language. This first newspaper in Kashmir State was a monthly. Known as the *Ladakh News*, it contained information on current events and geography. The monthly which had

been started by the Moravian Mission in Ladakh in 1903 ceased publication in 1907.

The Ladakhis are a literate people so far as their mother tongue is concerned. But in the matter of other languages like Hindi, Urdu and English they have been very backward.

Their dress is peculiar. The male attire bears a close resemblance to the dress worn by the Kushan rulers of India. The men wear long woollen cloaks, narrow trousers and felt shoes. Their long robes reaching to the ankles are girdled in the middle with a cloth band. The women put on woollen jackets and petticoats of many colours. They also put on sheep-skin jackets with the wool inside. The male head-dress consists of a fur-lined cap with upturned flaps—not dissimilar in appearance to the headgear of Kashmiri sadhus. The Ladakhi women's head-dress consists of what is known as the *perak* in the centre with semicircular woollen lappets covering the ears. The *perak* consists of a piece of red cloth or leather reaching down to the waist in a narrow point. The front part appearing over the forehead resembles the head of a cobra. The *perak* is usually studded with many turquoises and one or two ornaments of gold or silver. Formerly the men also wore pigtails but that practice is now dying out.

The women of Ladakh labour under few legal disabilities. In certain respects they are in a better position than men. If there be no son, the eldest daughter inherits the land. She also inherits the mother's ornaments. Divorce is open to both men and women and widow remarriage is permitted.

The Ladakhis have been a polyandrous people. The system of polyandry has, however, been confined strictly to brothers; the usual number of husbands to a woman being two or three. This cruel system seems to have been forced upon them by their inhospitable country which could not sustain a large population. The rich people here as elsewhere have, however, had more wives than one.

Agriculture is one of the main occupations of the people. Women work alongside their menfolk and at the time of ploughing and harvesting even the children and the aged will lend a helping hand. Often while the men are busy handling the more strenuous part of the work, their women will regale them with full-throated songs and homely dances.

The *zhu*, a cross between the yak and the cow, is usually employed for ploughing the land. *Grim*, a kind of barley is the main crop and is abundantly grown even at a height of 15,000 ft. Wheat, peas, rapeseed, beans and turnips are also grown. A number of fruits including apple, apricot, walnut, mulberry and grapes are grown on the lower warmer regions. The apricots and black currants are dried for export and use in winter. The apricots of Ladakh and Baltistan, popularly known as *bota-chera* in Kashmir, are very tasty. So are the seedless black currants. Fuel wood is scarce in Ladakh; poplar and willow, grown along river banks, are used mostly for building and for basket-making, etc.

Besides its use as a foodgrain *grim* is used in the manufacture of Ladakh's national drink *chang*. Tea, imported from Tibet (in bricks) is also in

common use. But it is prepared in a peculiar way. After stewing it for some hours it is mixed up in a special churn with butter, soda and salt. The Ladakhis' staple food consists of *sattu* (flour made from parched *grim*) taken with *chang*, butter, milk or tea. Wheat is also made use of. But rice is a delicacy reserved for special occasions only.

Rainfall being deficient, agriculture has to be carried on through artificial irrigation in this arid and difficult territory. And as the cultivable area in Ladakh is very small it can support only a section of the people. Large numbers of them have, therefore, to look for their livelihood elsewhere. Many of them have taken to sheep breeding and sheep grazing and follow a nomadic life. Known as *Chang-pas*, they live on the uplands of Rupshu in tents made of hides and yak-hair and roam about from place to place with their flocks of sheep and goats.

Ladakh and the adjoining areas have long been known as the sportsman's paradise. They are the home of the markhor, ibex and ovis ammon—all of them with wonderful horns. Other game including red bear, snow leopard, wild horse, Tibetan antelope and gazelle are also met with on the lofty uplands or in the deep ravines. The domestic animals of Ladakh include the pony, sheep, goat, yak, cow and dog. The ponies are used for playing the Ladakhis' national game, polo. In Ladakh and other frontier territories every large village has its own polo ground.

Ladakh is rich in mineral wealth. It is said to contain important minerals including lead, copper, sulphur, coal, iron, borax, gypsum, gold and precious

stones. The large quantity of gold-dust which the Indian satrapy on India's north-west paid to the Persian Emperor (before Alexander's invasion) is believed to have been collected from the sands in the rivers of Dardistan.

Ladakh is also a rich storehouse of medicinal and other herbs of great commercial value but industrial enterprise has so far been conspicuous by its absence. The waters of the Indus, however, provide vast possibilities for the generation of electric power and the consequent development of industry.

Ladakh produces its own salt—from the land-locked lakes in the eastern part of the territory. Small quantities of it used to be exported to Skardu and Kashmir. It also exports borax and dried fruits. But the main commercial product is wool, produced in the territory and imported from Yarkand and Tibet. This wool got from the soft underfleece of sheep and goats on high altitudes is one of the finest in the world and from it are made the famous Kashmiri *shawls*.

The Ladakhis are born traders but in recent times trade has largely been in the hands of outsiders. The poor Ladakhi has had to content himself mostly with the transportation of goods and merchandise only. Retail trade is often managed by the women while their menfolk attend to the more strenuous jobs.

Leh, the chief town and headquarters of Ladakh district, is about 11,500 ft. above the sea level. Lying on the ancient trade routes between Central Asia and India and Tibet and Western Asia, it has for centuries been an important trade centre. Its distance from Srinagar has been computed at about two hundred and forty miles and from Manali in the Punjab at three

hundred miles. By mule track the journey from Srinagar takes about a fortnight though air travel has now reduced it to a mere one hour and twenty minutes. The journey to Yarkand from Leh takes a little over three weeks while that to Tibet takes nearly double that time.

Situated as it is about half-way between the markets of India and Central Asia, Leh has been a terminus for caravans from both the regions. In summer it used to be the meeting place of traders from Kashmir, Punjab, Chinese Turkistan, Tibet and even Russia. Here the goods and the produce of the south were exchanged for those of the north—mostly by barter. On account of the difference in climate these traders seldom went beyond Leh and stayed in the place for a month or two before returning to their home countries. Thus they got ample opportunities to learn from and influence each other. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand how from the dawn of history when travelling was difficult and the means of communication few, artistic and cultural traditions of India have travelled in the wake of commercial enterprise and reached as far as Central Asia and China. It was indeed through Ladakh that the later-day Buddhism and its art and cultural traditions passed on from Kashmir to China and Tibet.

FA-HIEN IN LADAKH

Buddhism has been prevalent in Ladakh from before the beginning of the Christian era. Buddhism was the prevailing faith about 400 A.D. when the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien visited it. According to Alexander Cunningham* the faith had been introduced into this northern-most region of India in the time of Ashoka. He says that the Ladakhis attributed the spread of Buddhism beyond the Indus to some shramanas who came with sacred books about 243 B.C.

The introduction of Buddhism into Ladakh, as into Kashmir, is commonly attributed to Madhyantika and his fellow monks who were deputed to Kashmir and Gandhara in the time of Ashoka; but this is not correct. As in the case of Kashmir, Buddhism had found its way into Ladakh and the adjoining areas before the time of the great Indian Emperor. We have already seen how Buddhism was one of the living faiths in the Valley in the time of Surrendra. One of the viharas which this first Buddhist ruler of Kashmir erected was at Saurasa, (present-day Suru) beyond the Zojila. As already

*Author of *Ladak.*

noted, Kalhana located this monastery, named *Narendra-bhavana*, near the country of Dards. Obviously, Buddhism must either have been prevalent in the territory or was introduced into it in the time of Surrendra to make him found a monastery there. Later, in Ashoka's time, when Buddhism spread widely in Kashmir and other territories it is only reasonable to assume that monks in greater numbers crossed into Ladakh and Gilgit from Kashmir and Gandhara to spread the faith more extensively.

The country Kia-chha mentioned in Fa-Hien's *Fo-Ku-Ki* or Account of Buddhist Kingdoms has been identified with Ladakh by Alexander Cunningham. But some European Sinologists differ from him on this point. Abel Remusat equates it with Kashmir, Kalparoth with Skardu and Samuel Beal with Kartchou*. Thomas Watters is also disposed to agree with Kalparoth. More recently Dr. P.C. Bagchi of India has equated it with Kashgar†. But that is rather far-fetched. As against this, Cunningham's view identifying Kia-chha with Ladakh or some place in it is much more plausible.

The existence of trade relations between Khotan, Yarkand and Ladakh over the centuries is well-known. Three important routes across the Karakoram and Kuen Lun mountains connect Ladakh with these northern territories. Cunningham gives details of two such routes. Also—and this is more important—we know it from the Chinese pilgrim himself that he and his companions travelled *west-ward* from Kia-chha for about

*See Legge's *Fa-Hien's Record of Buddhist Kingdoms.*

†In his *India and Central Asia.*

a month before reaching North India. If Kia-chha were Kashgar, they could not have found themselves in North India after about a month's travel towards the west from Kashgar. Another weighty argument in support of Cunningham's identification is that he was able to trace in Ladakh two important relics of the Buddha mentioned by Fa-Hien in Kia-chha.

Fa-Hien who visited Ladakh or its north-west about 400 A.D. was a native of Wu-yang in the Shansi district of West China. His three elder brothers having died in infancy, his father had vowed to dedicate him to the service of Buddhism if he lived. He, therefore, had him entered as a shramana at the age of three. But after some time when the child was taken dangerously ill his parents at once sent him to the monastery which he refused to leave even when he was well again. Here he devoted himself to the study of Buddhist scriptures. Later, when he had received full monastic orders he was distressed "to observe the imperfect rules of discipline of the monks" in Chang'an. He therefore decided to come to India along with four other monks to secure complete and authentic copies of the *Vinaya-pitaka*.

Fa-Hien came to Ladakh from Khotan. The ruler of the place was then holding the *Pancha-parishad** or the quinquennial assembly, initiated by Ashoka. On such an occasion, the Chinese pilgrim tells us, the king invites shramanas from all quarters. After they are assembled in sufficiently large numbers their meeting place is decorated with silken streamers and canopies

*Cunningham says that in the Gyalpo's time, (Gyalpo was the title of the Rajas of Ladakh), the *lamas* assembled annually at Leh in the month of March and were dismissed with presents. In his own time they assembled at Hemis, about 22 miles from Leh.

are hung out in it. Water-lilies in gold and silver are made and fixed up behind the place where the chief monks are to sit. The other monks are seated on clean mats.

The assembly took place in the first, second or the third month of spring. It lasted about a month at the end of which the king and his ministers made their offerings. These included fine white woollen cloth, (possibly white *pashmina*) and all sorts of precious things. The presentation of these offerings took from one to seven days at the end of which they were redeemed by their owners for some value.

Fa-Hien mentions two relics of the Buddha which he found in Kia-chha. One of them was his spitoon or bowl made of stone and in colour like his alms-bowl. The other was a tooth of the Buddha for which the people had erected a stupa.

Writing in 1853 A.D. Cunningham says "Now, one of these relics (the alms-bowl) still exists in a temple to the north of Le (Leh). It is a large earthenware vase, similar in shape to the largest seatite vases extracted* from the Bhilsa topes. But Ladak also possessed a tooth of the Buddha, which was formerly enshrined at Le in a *dung-ten*, or solid mound of masonry similar to the topes of Bhilsa and Afghanistan. The *dung-ten* still exists, though ruinous, but the holy tooth is said to have been carried away by Ali Sher, of Balti, upwards of 200 years ago, when Ladakh was invaded and plundered by the Musalmans of the west, who most probably threw the much prized relic. . . . into the Indus. At any rate, it has never since been heard of.

*By Cunningham and Lt. Maisey.

The Chinese pilgrim notes that there were more than a thousand monks and their disciples, all students of the Hinayana, connected with the stupa which contained the tooth relic. The shramanas in Ladakh made use of the revolving prayer cylinder and the Chinese pilgrim speaks highly of its efficacy. He also says that the common people's dress in this country was of coarse materials as in his own country, China. But the country, he adds, was mountainous, and so cold that no cereals but wheat could be grown.

CHAPTER XX

FROM FA-HIEN'S TO PRESENT TIMES

The early history of Ladakh, like that of most other regions in India, is shrouded in darkness. Alexander Cunningham quotes with approval Moorecroft's view that Ladakh originally formed one of the provinces of Tibet, governed as to temporal matters by an independent prince and in spiritual affairs by the Head Lama of Lhasa. But that does not seem to be correct; at any rate it is certain that for at least the first six centuries of the Christian era Ladakh could not look upon Tibet as its spiritual fountain-head. For, as already noted, Tibet got its Buddhism towards the middle of the seventh century A.D. The faith spread there through the efforts of Indian monks, a large number of whom were Kashmiris. These latter went there through or from Ladakh. Some of the monks might have belonged to Ladakh itself. A Ladakhi monk is known to have been the *guru* of Amritaprabha, the Assamese queen of Meghavahana, who ruled Kashmir towards the middle of the sixth century.

According to Tibetan *Chronicles* Ladakh was included in the domain of Sron-btsan-sgam-po. This first Buddhist ruler of Tibet who ruled in the later half of

of the seventh century, extended the frontiers of his kingdom to include parts of Nepal and China, and Chinese Turkistan, Gilgit and Ladakh. Tibet was thus brought into contact with Kashmir and it was through Ladakh that the Tibetan scholar, Thonmi Sambhota and his companions came to Kashmir for study.

Tibetan control over Ladakh seems to have lapsed after the death of Sron-btsan-sgam-po. At best it might have continued to pay tribute, thus acknowledging the Tibetan ruler's suzerainty. That Ladakh had not been incorporated into Tibet is clear from the fact that Kalhana draws a clear distinction between the Tibetans and the Bhauttas—inhabitants of Ladakh—when referring to the conquests of Lalitaditya (699—736 A.D.). After the Kashmir ruler's death, Tibetans appear to have re-established their control over Ladakh and there is mention of the erection of a Buddhist temple in Skardu by Khri-lde-btsan-po, the sixth successor of Sron-btsan-sgam-po. Khri-lde-btsan-po ruled towards the later half of the eighth century. His grandfather is reported to have beaten back a Chinese army which tried to reconquer Gilgit. Gilgit was possibly included in Chinese Turkistan before its conquest by Sron-btsan-sgam-po.

Disintegration set in in Tibet after the death of the apostate king Glan-darma, and in the time of his grandson, Dpalhkhor-btsan, many areas became independent. Khri-skyid-lde-ni-ma-gon, second son of Dpalhkhor-btsan, was compelled to leave Lhasa itself. But with the assistance of a neighbouring chief who gave him his daughter in marriage, he was able to establish his control over Ladakh, Guge and Spurang. Before his death, however, he divided his kingdom among his three sons. Of these the one named Dpal-ge-lde got Ladakh.

His nephew Hkhor-lde it was who later renounced his territory (Guge) in favour of his younger brother and achieved high renown as a Buddhist monk under the name of Ye-shes-hod. As already noted, Ye-shes-hod or Gyanaprabha sent Ratnabhadra and twenty other young Tibetans to Kashmir for studies. Ratnabhadra is credited with the erection of a number of beautiful Buddhist temples in Ladakh, Guge and Spiti. One of these is yet to be found in Ladakh—at Alchi, near the bank of the Indus not far from Basgo.

Little is known about Ladakh between the eleventh and the seventeenth centuries A.D. The history of Kashmir also has little light to shed upon this blank in Ladakh's history. Only we learn that Rinchana, who succeeded in securing the Kashmir throne in 1320 A.D., was a Bhautta prince (of Ladakh) who had run away from his homeland for fear of his enemies. Muslim rulers of Kashmir never penetrated far into the northern regions; only a few of their commanders appear to have achieved some minor successes in border clashes with the troops of their northern neighbours. But we know that the people of Ladakh also were subjected to great oppression when in 1533 A.D., Mirza Haider Dughlat invaded the Valley of Kashmir. The invader has himself recorded* that he was responsible for such butchery and bloodshed in the Nubra Valley that thereafter nobody dared offer any resistance to him in the rest of the territory (Ladakh).

With Chovang-Namgyal in the last quarter of the sixteenth century we reach the *terra-firma* of Ladakh's chequered history. Chovang-Namgyal, a descendant

*See Waddell's *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*.

of the ancient kings of Tibet, set himself up as the ruler of Ladakh about 1580 A.D.* His conquests which included Rudok, the western district of Tibet, brought him much wealth. With this he erected a big image of the Buddha. The consecration of the image was celebrated as a great festival when all the people made their offerings to it. Chovang-Namgyal intended to put up a few more sacred images but was prevented from doing so by his death about the end of the sixteenth century.

As Chovang died issueless, he was succeeded by his brother Jamya Namgyal. The new ruler and some of his principal followers were taken prisoner in Purik, a petty principality corresponding to present-day Kargil, when soon after his accession they had gone there to punish its rebel chief who had transferred his allegiance to Ali Mir , Gyalpo (Raja) of Balti. The Ladakh ruler and his followers were taken prisoner not because of a defeat in battle but because of a violent storm which overtook them in Purik. He was sent to Skardu while his troops were allowed to go back to Ladakh.

"Ali Mir, the ruler of Skardo, taking advantage of the helpless state of the country, immediately marched upon Le (Leh) with a large force and took possession of the whole of Ladakh. The temples and monasteries were burned, the images of the Buddha and of his various personified emanations were destroyed by the bigoted Mohammedans; and all the religious and historical books were thrown into the Indus. The conquest was complete; and arrangements having been made for

*Cunningham's *Ladak*.

the future government of Ladak, Ali Mir marched back to Skardo."*

Ali Mir appears to have been a sagacious ruler. His conquest of Ladakh seems to have convinced him of the impossibility of retaining that extensive territory for long. Immediately upon his return he, therefore, released Jamya Namgyal and gave him one of his daughters in marriage.

Jamya, whose return back to his territory with the daughter of his enemy as his wife was a matter of rejoicing for his subjects restored some of the temples and images of the Buddha. He got copies of some of the sacred books from Tibet.

Singge Namgyal who succeeded him about 1620 A. D. was one of his two sons by the Balti princess. He was a powerful ruler who not only carried out successful raids into the neighbouring areas but inflicted a crushing defeat on Ahmed Khan, chief of Balti, who with the assistance of the Moghul Emperor, Jehangir, tried to invade Ladakh in his time. He also reduced some of the neighbouring territories which had thrown off Ladakh's yoke on receipt of information about Ladakh's invasion by Ahmed Khan. Of these, the Tibetan province of Rudok, which had been conquered by his uncle, was now annexed. Cunningham says that flushed with success, Singge next thought of attacking Lhasa itself and when he had advanced about half-way to the Tibetan capital he was met by a deputation with several mule-loads of gold, silver, tea and other articles as peace offering. Thereupon he consented to evacuate the occupied territory. Later he is stated to have taken

*Vide: *Ladak.*

possession of a number of districts including Spiti in the Panjab.

Singge Namgyal is perhaps the greatest indigenous ruler that Ladakh has ever known. His rule is generally placed between 1620 and 1670 A.D. During his reign Ladakh was visited by a monk, named Staktshang Raspa, who had travelled through many countries including Kashmir. He erected an image of Chamba or Maitreya Buddha in Timosgam, a village on the right bank of the Indus a little below Leh. At the time of its consecretion he gave away in alms all that he possessed and appointed five monks for the performance of daily *puja*. Singge himself restored the various Buddhist images and shrines. He is also credited with the building of a nine-storeys high palace which to this day remains the most conspicuous building in Leh.

Singge's son and successor Deldan Namgyal was a zealous Buddhist. He is credited with having put up a large image of gold and silver in the village Shay near Leh and the erection of a number of Buddhist temples in the various districts, including Zanskar. In the fort at Leh he erected two sacred images, those of Chamba and Chanrazik, corresponding to Maitreya and Avalokiteshvara and appointed several priests for their daily worship.

Deldan also overcame all his adversaries, including the chiefs of Karchu and Balti, who had the military assistance of the Moghul governor of Kashmir. The two chiefs thereafter became tributary to Ladakh. But Ladakh itself was invaded by Sokpos, (Sakas according to Cunningham and Kalmak Tartars according to

Moorecroft) soon after. When the Ladakhi forces found it impossible to overcome the cruel invaders, Deldan sought military assistance from Ibrahim Khan, a Moghul governor of Kashmir in the time of Aurangzeb. With this assistance the Ladakhis were successful in driving out the invaders. In the following year the Sokpos returned and destroyed part of the fort at Leh. They, however, agreed to go away when Rudok was made over to them. This settlement is stated to have been brought about by a monk named Brug-pa-Pham-Bang-po.

To secure military assistance from the Muslim governor of Kashmir, Deldan appears to have feigned acceptance of the Islamic faith but once the invaders were driven out, he again openly professed the ancestral faith. He, however, had a mosque—the first in Ladakh—built at Leh.

His son Delak, in whose favour he abdicated, ruled from 1705 to 1740 A.D. In his time the district of Spiti which had perhaps been lost in the time of his father was reannexed. Towards the end of his reign Ladakh was successfully invaded by Murad, the chief of Balti who ruled from 1720 to 1750 A.D. The Ladakhis were not long in retaliating. They invaded Balti in the time of Ali Sher, father of the last independent ruler of the territory.

Ladakh, which continued to pay tribute to Kashmir from the time of Deldan Namgyal was conquered in 1834 A.D. by Dogra troops ably led by Raja Gulab Singh's great general, Zorawar Singh. The Dogra troops who had entered the frontier regions from Kishtwar soon extended their master's sway over Baltistan also.

The successes which Zorawar Singh achieved in Ladakh and Baltistan led him to the ill-fated invasion of Tibet in 1841 A.D. in which both he and large numbers of his followers perished.

Kashmir came into Maharaja Gulab Singh's possession in 1846 A.D. In the time of his son and successor, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, Gilgit and the adjoining areas were added to the State of Jammu and Kashmir and thereafter the history of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Gilgit becomes one, till we reach the fateful year 1947 when the State was the victim of unprovoked aggression from Pakistan and parts of it were occupied by that country.

Ladakh and the other frontier regions did not receive much attention at the hands of the first three Dogra rulers. On account of their distance from the capital and the difficulties and dangers involved in reaching them the frontier regions were treated as a kind of an appanage by the officials deputed to govern them. Besides the annual tribute and taxes for their master, they collected a rich harvest of gold, carpets, *namdas*, etc. , for themselves, thus giving rise to the mistaken notion that Ladakh and the adjoining regions were fabulously rich.

Though it is said that some of the monasteries in Ladakh did not escape pillage at the hands of the Dogra victors,—the troops under Zorawar Singh are stated to have plundered some Tibetan monasteries also—yet it must be conceded that Dogra rule conferred full religious liberty and security on the people of the State including those inhabiting the frontier regions. People of Ladakh and Baltistan had no longer to live in dread

of each other or their western neighbours. Another advantage of Dogra rule was that the regions gradually opened up to the outside world.

Early in Maharaja Ranbir Singh's time, (1857–1885 A. D.), Ladakh and the other frontier areas of Kashmir State attracted the active attention of the British authorities in India. This was because in the sixties of the last century, part of Sinkiang or Chinese Turkistan declared its independence under one Yakub Beg who concluded a treaty with Russia. The British Government immediately set about devising measures to check the growth of Russian influence in this vital area in the north of their Indian Empire.

Reference has already been made to Indo-Central Asian trade and cultural relations through Ladakh in ancient times. With the declaration of its independence by Chinese Turkistan in the last century, the people of that country began to look to Russia in the north and to India in the south for the supply of those goods which were not locally produced. Yakub Beg, in his treaty with Russia, had agreed to a substantial exemption on all Russian imports into his country. On the contrary, the transit duty on Indo-Central Asian trade levied in Kashmir was found to be rather discouraging for its growth. Early in May 1870 A.D. the British Indian Government, therefore, entered into a treaty with the Kashmir Durbar under which no transit or other duty was to be charged, in Kashmir, on goods passing from India to Central Asia and vice versa along the route over the 16,500 foot Khardung Pass. In return for this concession the Indian Government undertook to refund

the import duty on bonded goods entering Kashmir and to abolish the export duty on shawls.

Though Sinkiang did not retain its independence for long yet the trade over the Khardung La route, designated the Treaty High Road, continued and every year caravans from Yarkand and Kashgar came to Ladakh with their consignments of carpets, namdas, shawl wool, coarse cotton, borax, salt and gold and ponies to exchange them for sugar, spices, cotton prints, brocades, shawls and saffron from Kashmir or India. This trade provided employment to the poor people in Ladakh and Baltistan for they were employed as coolies for the carriage of merchandise and the maintenance of the road. In fact the treaty of 1870 itself stipulated that villages on the route would supply labour and baggage ponies at cheap rates to the traders. This in course of time developed into an oppressive system of forced labour known as *Res**.

In the time of Maharaja Pratap Singh, (1885–1925 A.D.), which saw the beginnings of a modern administration in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh continued to be a neglected backwater of the State. As in the time of his two predecessors little was done for the economic, social or educational advancement of the people. The result was that the people of Ladakh and the other frontier regions came to be one of the most backward people, steeped in ignorance, superstition, squalor and poverty.

Though it is a fact that little was done for the development of Ladakh and its people yet it would be wrong to assume that the rules of the first three

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*In response to widespread public demand the obnoxious *Res* system has been abolished recently.

Dogra rulers were altogether devoid of significance for the people of Ladakh. As already noted, the territory began to open up, the unknown land began to be better known, not only to outsiders but also to people in the Valley, some of whom went there on petty assignments. Also a new link between Kashmir and Ladakh came into existence in the time of Maharaja Ranbir Singh and his sons.

Ranbir Singh who was an enlightened prince revived the traditions of Avantivarman and Zain-ul-Abidin. He took steps to obtain ancient texts and employed a number of capable pandits and *moulvis* to transliterate or translate them. Dr. Stein has catalogued nearly five thousand of the works collected by the Maharaja. His sons, Ram Singh and Amar Singh, respectively collected 2,000 and 1,325 works. Reference has already been made to the *Brha-Nila-tantram*,* the *Nirvana-tantra* and the *Tara Rahasya* among these. Another interesting work in Raja Amar Singh's collection is the *Kakshaputa* or *Rasa-Ratnakara* of Nagarjuna.

The rediscovery of the ancient heritage of Kashmir and the researches of eminent research scholars like Prof. Buhler and Dr. Aurel Stein—especially the latter's English translation of the *Rajatarangini*—made the people of Kashmir realise that their motherland had in the past been a stronghold of Buddhism, the faith which was still prevalent in Ladakh. This brought the people of the two regions nearer and some Kashmiri Pandit youngmen began to take active interest in the Buddhists of Ladakh and the amelioration of their lot.

*The *Brha-Nila-tantram* and some other works were edited in the time of Maharaja Hari Singh by the Kashmiri scholars Ramchandra Kak, Hara Bhatta Shastri and Madhusudan Koul.

LAMAS AND GUMPAS

Ladakh, like Tibet, is known as the land of lamas*. Lamaism, as the form of Buddhism prevalent in Ladakh is sometimes known, is a combination of the Mahayana and tantrism, not unmixed with traces of Bon, the ancient religion of Tibet. Besides Shakya Thuba or the Buddha, the people in Ladakh worship Jamya (Manjushri), Chanrazik (Avalokiteshvara), Maitreya (the future Buddha), Grolma (Tara), Padma Pani and Vajra Pani.

Religion is a dominating factor in the life of the simple, unsophisticated Ladakhis and monks and nuns are fairly numerous. The monks and nuns are known as *lamas* and *chomos* respectively and the monasteries as *gumpas*.

Most families in Ladakh† dedicate a child to the brotherhood of priests. Sometimes it is the first-born or the favourite child, but more often it is the younger sons who are not entitled to share the patrimony or their elder brothers' wife that are earmarked for priestly

***Lama* means a 'superior one'.

†In Mongolia also Buddhist families dedicate a child to the service of the faith.

life. While the law of primogeniture is responsible for sending many younger sons to the monasteries, a girl is dedicated to the sangha only when a family has no son or cannot spare one. The cruel system of polyandry may also have something to do in condemning some girls to spinsterhood. But the number of nuns is far less than that of monks.

The nuns usually pass their days quietly under the parental roof. But those not wanted there join the nunneries. The male children dedicated to the service of the faith, however, live with their parents only till they are about eight years of age. Later they join the monasteries where they receive a new name. Before ordination they have, however, to pass through the stages of pupil and probationer. The principal monks round off their education with a visit to Lhasa which is looked upon as their spiritual fountain-head by the Ladakhis. They regard the Dalai Lama as the Vice-regent of the Buddha on earth and most of the *Kushoks* or Head Lamas of monasteries in Ladakh are appointed by him or with his approval. About half a dozen Kushoks are believed to reincarnate themselves and after death they are searched for in the same manner as the Dalai Lama in Tibet.

After the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir, the people of Ladakh came to look more and more to Lhasa for spiritual guidance and although the territory was independent, both the ruler and the people, out of respect, made offerings to the Head Lama there. These offerings have wrongly been interpreted as political tribute by some people—most probably because in Tibet the temporal and spiritual powers both vest in the Head

Lama. Even Cunningham admits that Ladakh's political dependence on Tibet was more nominal than real.

The lamas form a picturesque element in the country's population. Most of them wear red robes resembling dressing gowns, girdled with a red band. The lamas generally put on red or yellow caps, but in summer months many of them go about with their closely shaven heads uncovered.

Both monks and nuns are divided into two sects—the Red and the Yellow. Members of the Yellow Sect enjoy a higher reputation for asceticism and learning than their Red brethren. The latter, however, are more numerous than the former. During recent years the Red Sect has also begun to tighten its discipline.

The Red Sect in Ladakh, as in Tibet, regards Padma Sambhava as its guru and founder. The Yellow Sect, on the other hand, gives the highest place to the Tibetan reformer Tson-kha-pa. Tson-kha-pa who lived in the fourteenth century instituted a stricter code of discipline. His followers are forbidden to marry or to drink wine.

Priestly life confers many privileges but the monks and nuns are required to lead strictly disciplined lives and mostly remain unmarried. Though the two live apart yet they frequently come into contact with one another. The nuns willingly undertake household duties like cooking, washing, etc., in the monasteries.

The lamas constitute such an essential element in the life of the people that social and religious life would be impossible without them. They are their teachers, physicians, priests and astrologers. The more important among them, the Kushoks, are looked

upon as their spiritual preceptors by the people and both on this account and on account of their learning, piety and kind-heartedness, they command great respect. The Kushok's visit to a village is an event. He is accorded a big welcome with bands playing and the people—men, women and children—standing on either side of the route to receive his benediction. In the village people make offerings to him—both in cash and kind.

Even the smallest village has its own monastery and lamas. Also in Buddhist houses in Ladakh, as in most Hindu houses in Kashmir, a room is set apart for worship. In this well-kept room are placed beautiful images of the Buddha and the other gods to whom worship is offered daily by reciting hymns and mantras and by turning the prayer-cylinder. Besides floral offerings, lights and incense are burned. So great is the devotion of the Ladakhis to their religion that when they go on a long journey they invariably carry some religious text or the other on their person. This is believed to ensure safety.

The monasteries or gumpas are well endowed and their extensive estates comprise some of the most fertile tracts of land in the territory. But the people at large do not look upon them as an agency of exploitation like the *zamindars* and *jagirdars*. This is partly due to their religious sentiments but mainly because the institution of lamas is not hereditary and confined to a selected few. The lamas generally do not marry and everybody is free to become a lama. The monastic order in Ladakh comprises the most-loved and the unwanted members from most of the families in the territory.

It is therefore not surprising that when the Inquiry Committee headed by the Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir State visited Ladakh in the year 1953 to make an on-the-spot study of various measures taken by the State Government, it was represented to it both by proprietors and tenants that lands attached to the gumpas should be excluded from the operation of the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act. The Committee, known after its chairman Mr. Justice Jankinath Wazir, as the Wazir Committee, observes on pages 30 and 31 of its *Report*:

"It was rather surprising that the tenants who were likely to gain by the operation of the Act on the lands attached to the gumpas have unanimously desired that these lands should remain attached to the gumpas and be free from the operation of the Abolition Act. It was specially enquired from them why they were in favour of the retention of the land with the gumpas. Their reply was that the lands which were attached to the gumpas were cultivated by the tenants and they had to pay only one-fourth of the produce to the gumpas. The gumpas' share of produce was utilised for educational, religious and charitable purposes and for feeding the poor and the needy and, therefore, they would like that the gumpas should not be divested of these lands."

The large-scale membership of the monasteries coupled with the possession of vast properties by them has necessitated a broad division of the monks into two categories, *viz.*, those that attend to the temporal needs of the community and the others who do not concern themselves with worldly matters but devote their time to meditation and worship. The former cultivate the land, collect the rent from monastery tenants, wander about

from place to place to collect alms and engage themselves in cattle breeding, trade, etc., and keep the accounts. The spiritual monks, as the latter may be called, are, besides looking after the education and training of the monks in the monastery, required to perform the puja and organise festivals, plays and dances.

The gumpas or monasteries are the most conspicuous buildings in Ladakh. The word gumpa signifies a solitary place and in this connection it may be remembered that the monasteries were originally intended to be built in places far from the bustle and disturbing influences of the cities. Perched on high cliffs, they look both picturesque and impressive. Though somewhat difficult of access, a visit to one of them is a rewarding experience. They all contain exquisite images of the Buddha and some of the other gods of the Buddhist pantheon. The images inside some of the gumpas are of such colossal dimensions that one wonders how they were made and carried to the lofty pinnacles on which many of the gumpas stand.

The path leading to the gumpas is lined with *chhoskhor* or prayer cylinders and in the neighbourhood of some of the more influential monasteries stand edifices known as *kaganis*. These latter are constructed of brick and plastered over and painted. The prayer cylinder is an ingenious device for multiplying a man's prayers. Made of metal, they are filled with scrolls of prayers and charms. As a devotee walks into the gumpa he sets them in rotation with a gentle motion of the hand, believing that in doing so he is sending to heaven prayers equal to the number of prayers inside the cylinder,

multiplied by the total number of rotations. Some of the cylinders are worked by water power. The lamas always carry with them a prayer cylinder which they keep constantly rotating.

The prayer cylinder has a very long history. It is first mentioned in Fa-Hien's account of his travels. As already stated, he found it in the hands of the shramanas of Kia-chha or Ladakh. The prayer cylinder has also been found on the coins of the Kushan ruler Hushka who lived about two hundred years before Fa-Hien.

The gumpas are spacious buildings. In addition to the main prayer halls and chapels they contain scores of rooms for the lamas to live in. Inside the chapel are placed beautiful images of Maitreya and other gods to whom worship is offered a number of times during the day. A butter-fed wick-lamp is kept constantly burning in it. The walls of the chapel and other rooms in the monastery are decorated with beautiful paintings and costly tapestries. The monastery walls are surmounted with a large number of prayer flags.

The most famous and by all accounts the oldest and the wealthiest monastery in Ladakh is the Hemis Gumpa. Situated about twentytwo miles to the south-east of Leh it belongs to the Red Sect of lamas. The monastery which houses hundreds of lamas is now connected with Leh by a jeepable road. Earlier, one had to do the distance from Leh either on foot or on horse-back.

Another important monastery is to be found at Lamayuru, about sixty miles from Leh. The monastery

built on the low hills at the far end of a high valley consists of a large number of buildings and contains a colossal image of Chanrazik (Avalokiteshvara) with eleven heads and a thousand hands. A similar big image of the god is to be found in Shankar Gumpa near Leh. This gumpa, belonging to the Yellow Sect, also houses a gorgeous representation of a Buddhist goddess with "a thousand arms and legs and a thousand eyes." Shankar Gumpa is perhaps the only monastery in Ladakh which is built on a level plain. Besides other images, this gumpa contains a number of statuettes of the Tibetan reformer, Tson Khapa.

By far the biggest image—of the Buddha—in Ladakh is to be found in the Shay Gumpa about eight miles from Leh. The image put up by Deldan Namgyal is made of copper and is covered with gold leaf. Its height is estimated to be 40 feet while its head is about 8 feet broad. The statue is perfectly proportioned and exudes an atmosphere of peace and solemnity. Tsemo Gumpa rising behind the old palace at Leh houses a huge image of Chamba (Maitreya Buddha). The image is a model of symmetry and the ecstatic expression in its eyes is simply bewitching. One of the gumpas at Basgo also houses a gigantic image of Chamba.

Images studded with gold and silver and set with gems are to be met with in some other monasteries also. These and the marvellous paintings and scrolls which adorn the walls of the monasteries testify to the high artistic skill of the people of this barren land in the domains of sculpture and painting.

Some of the other notable monasteries are Spituk, four miles from Leh, Rezong, thirtysix miles from Leh and Deskit and Samur or Samstanling in the Nubra Valley.

Besides the gumpas the two other structures which immediately attract attention on entering a Ladakhi village are the *chortens* and the *manis.* The *chorten* which seems to have been derived from the word chaitya, now houses part of the ashes of some important personage. The Ladakhis believe that a good man after death is raised to the dignity of a *lhamayin* or demi-god while the bad man goes down to the state of a brute. After cremation part of the dead man's ashes are mixed with clay and moulded into a small image or cake which is stamped with an image of the Buddha. This image or tablet is then placed, along with extracts from sacred texts, in the peculiar pagoda-like structure known as chorten. In height the chortens vary from a few feet to about 50 feet.

The manis are massive stone walls, about 6 or 7 feet in height, with the top sloping down from the centre towards either side. They are from 6 to 10 feet broad but their length varies from a few feet to over a thousand feet. Cunningham has recorded that a mani he saw at Basgo measured nearly half a mile in length. A direct descendent of Ashoka's edicts, the flat-stoned surfaces of these prayer walls bear carvings and inscriptions. The former include beautiful images of the Buddha and the other gods and designs of mystic figures and the latter the well-known *mantras* "*Om Mani Padma Hum*", "*Om Vajra Pani Hum*", etc., repeated hundreds or thousands of times. Some of them have

whole books carved on them. The manis are found not only near the villages but also at places where no one lives. The devout walk round them whenever they happen to pass them, believing that they are thus adding to their prayers by the number of the mantras inscribed on them.

A visitor to Ladakh by the overland route first comes across manis , chortens and gumpas at the village of Shergol, eighteen miles from Kargil. Three miles from here, at Moulbeck, is found a colossal image—eighteen feet high—of Chamba (Maitreya Buddha) carved on the face of a perpendicular rock. It is said that once when Ladakh was invaded by Muslims, the Buddhists hid it from them by erecting buildings and walls all around it. The statue now stands forth majestically, with its four arms, earrings, necklaces and bracelets.

Besides containing the sacred images and the holy texts of the Buddhists of Ladakh the gumpas are the repositories of the best in Ladakh's art and culture. The lamas, at any rate those high up in the hierarchy, are models of conduct. Their learning, tolerance, self-abnegation and love of fellow beings are an example to others. Their hospitality is proverbial and their sympathy for the poor and the needy well-known.

In addition to exquisite images of the Buddha and the other members of the Buddhist pantheon, the gumpas contain exquisite works of Ladakhi art. These comprise paintings, tapestries, murals and metal work. Spon Rigzon is perhaps the best Ladakhi painter of modern times and he has painted various scenes of the Buddha's life in a number of gumpas. Writing about a painting

which was presented to him during his visit to Ladakh in 1952, Shri Yuvraj Karan Singh, *Sadr-e-Riyasat* of Jammu and Kashmir says:*

"It depicts Lord Buddha sitting in the Lotus posture. It is a work the like of which I have never seen. The detail is exquisite and the colours wonderfully smooth and mellow. The whole composition is so perfect that one can hardly credit its creation to this isolated and untutored race of men. I met the artist himself, an old man over seventy."

Like the Tibetans, the Ladakhis are also good modellers in clay and workers in metal. Their intricate work in metal is found on the various pots and utensils required for puja in the monasteries.

The gumpas are also the places where the famous mystery plays of Ladakh are staged. Every monastery celebrates its own festival, which, in addition to the performance of the customary puja, is an occasion for music, dance and drama. The *mela* of the Spituk Gumpa falls in the middle of January while that at Shay in the beginning of August. At the Shay festival offerings to the god consist of the first ears of corn grown on the land of landowners.

The Hemis festival in honour of Padma Sambhava is the most famous festival in Ladakh. Held in the month of June, it attracts large numbers of people from the outlying villages and some people from outside Ladakh also. The mystery play, interspersed with dances, enacted on this occasion represents the fight of the forces of Evil and Good, with the latter triumphing

*In The *Sunday Statesman*, dated the 26th October, 1952.

in the end. The actors are lamas dressed in elaborate brocade costumes. Some of them use great black hats crowned with images and others wear masks of animals, skeletons, etc. The orchestra on the occasion comprises giant trumpets, cymbals, drums and clarinets.

The puja performed on the occasion of this and the other festivals is looked upon as a safeguard against possible calamities on the land and its people.

Just as we have seen in the case of the people of Ladakh so in the case of their lamas, we come across no narrow spirit of exclusivism or parochialism. They freely associate with one another and participate in each other's festivals. Kushok Bakula, the Head Lama of the Yellow Sect is known to have presided over the celebrations at the Red Sect monastery of Hemis. There are, in fact, occasions when lamas from most of the gumpas gather together in one monastery to worship and recite the sacred texts known as *Skah-hgyur** and *Stan-hgyur.** *Skah-hgyur* and *Stan-hgyur*, also known as *Kanjur* and *Tanjur*, consist of 108 volumes and 225 volumes respectively.

**Skah-hgyur* means translations of the Buddha's sayings, *Stan-hgyur* means translations of the works of his disciples. While the *Kanjur* is based on the *Tripitaka* with tantric additions, the *Tanjur* comprises treatises on grammar, poetry, logic, medicine, astrology, painting, etc., etc. The *Kanjur* and the *Tanjur* were drawn up by the great Tibetan scholar Bu-ston in the fourteenth century.

CHAPTER XXII

BUDDHISM IN GILGIT

No account of Buddhism in Kashmir State will be complete without a reference to the prevalence of the faith in Gilgit and the surrounding areas, commonly known as Dardistan. We have seen the faith prevailing in Kia-chha or Ladakh. Also, it is well-known that in olden times Buddhism flourished in Udayana and Gandhara on India's northwest. It is, therefore, not surprising that the faith was professed in the territory between Udayana and Ladakh also. This territory comprises Gilgit, Chilas, Darel, Hunza, Nagar, Punial, Ishkuman, Yasin and Koh-Ghizar. Its inhabitants, who are Aryans, are known as Dards.

Skardu or Balti to the west of Ladakh tehsil, has an area of nearly 2,200 square miles. To its west on the left bank of the Indus lies Astor with an area of 1,600 square miles. Astor and Skardu together constitute Balti or Baltistan. Its inhabitants, Baltis, are a blend of Mongol and Aryan stocks. Gilgit lies to the north of Astor on the right bank of the Indus and along the lower course of the Gilgit river. It has an area of about 2,500 square miles. Its chief town, also known as Gilgit, is at about the same distance from Srinagar as Leh. The districts

of Chilas and Darel lie to the southwest of Gilgit and Hunza and Nagar to its north. The inhabitants of Hunza and Nagar, known as Kanjutis, have been notorious for their marauding raids on the poor, miserable Baltis, whom they sometimes carried away for being sold as slaves in Central Asia. Punial, Ishkoman, Koh-Ghizar and Yasin lie to the west of Gilgit and Hunza-Nagar. Yasin with an area of 4,200 square miles is a large district on the upper course of the Gilgit river. Chitral lies further west beyond Yagistan.

While the Mehtar of Chitral and the Thoms or Mirs of Hunza and Nagar acknowledged the suzerainty of the Maharaja of Kashmir and paid tribute to him most of the other areas formed part of Kashmir State till October 1947.

Fa-Hien to whom we owe the earliest account of Buddhism in Kia-chha or Ladakh has also left us a description of the faith in one principality in Dardistan. This is Darel which he visited on his way to Udayana from Ladakh and Skardu. The celebrated Chinese pilgrim called it the small kingdom of *To-Leih*. Here he and his fellow travellers found a large number of monks, all studying the Hinayana. They also found an imposing image of the Buddha—eight cubits high—to which offerings were made by the rulers of the neighbouring countries. Stein who also mentions references to this much venerated image by Fa-Hien and Hiuen Tsang, says that it was a wooden representation of Maitreya Buddha.

Hiuen Tsang who visited India about two and a quarter centuries after Fa-Hien has left a description of the people of Baltistan and their religious faith. He

calls the territory *Po-lu-lo* which, according to Cunningham* corresponds to the modern district of Balti or Baltistan. The Chinese pilgrim-scholar writes, "The country is rich in supplies. The climate is continually cold. The people are rough and rude in character. There is little humanity or justice with them, and as for politeness such a thing has not been heard of. They are coarse and despicable in appearance and wear clothes made of wool. Their letters are nearly like those of India, their language somewhat different. There are about a hundred sangharamas in the country, with something like a thousand priests who show no great zeal for learning and are careless in their moral conduct."†

Another conclusive evidence about the prevalence of Buddhism in Gilgit and the adjoining areas came to light about twentyfive years ago when several Buddhist manuscripts in Sanskrit were found in the ruins of a stupa in Gilgit. By a happy coincidence the pleasant duty of announcing‡ this discovery to the outside world fell to the lot of that great lover of ancient Kashmir, Sir Aurel Stein.

One day in July 1931, some shepherd boys watching their flocks near Naupur village about two miles west of Gilgit Cantonment, cleared a piece of timber sticking out on top of a small stone-covered mound. Removal of some stones on the top of the mound brought to notice a wooden box in a dome-shaped chamber. On opening it, the wooden box revealed four other small

*See his *Ancient Geography of India.*

†See Beal's *Buddhist Records of the Western World.*

‡In the *Statesman* dated the 24th July, 1931.

wooden boxes containing a number of ancient manuscripts. This priceless treasure was fortunately taken possession of by the Wazir-i-Wazarat or District Officer of Gilgit before it was too late. Later the manuscripts were sent to Srinagar under the orders of Maharaja Hari Singh who asked his Prime Minister to have them published.

What with the political disturbances in the State in the early thirties and the indifference of the then authorities the manuscripts remained unexplored and unpublished till the late Gopalaswami Ayyangar assumed the Prime Ministership of the State. That greatest of Kashmir's Prime Ministers entrusted the work of editing the manuscripts to Dr. Nalinaksha Dutt. Dr. Dutt who has given an elaborate description* of some of the manuscripts and how he came to undertake the welcome task of editing them says that Dr. Shyamaprasad Mookerjee, then Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University and later also the President of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, wanted him "to obtain the mss. from the Kashmir Durbar if the Durbar decided not to publish them." But fortunately the Maharaja's Government, at the instance of its Chief Secretary, Pt. Ramchandra Kak† decided to do so on their own and provided the necessary facilities to Dr. Dutt, who with the assistance of Vidyavaridhi Shiv Nath Sharma, a Kashmiri Pandit, Prof. D.M. Bhattacharya and others edited and translated some of the manuscripts.

*In his introductory notes to *Gilgit Manuscripts Vol. I.*

†Shri Kak who had been the Director of the State's Archaeological and Research Department later rose to be its Prime Minister.

The Gilgit manuscripts—about five dozen in number—vary from nine inches to about two feet in length and from two inches to about five inches in breadth . They are written mostly in Upright Gupta script. According to Dr. Nalinaksha Dutt the manuscripts may have been written in the fifth, the sixth or at the latest in the seventh century A.D. But it is not unlikely that some of them may be of an earlier date. About the motives which inspired this pious work he adds: "The only plausible explanation that we can offer is that well-to-do persons seeking merit by propagating the *dharmasastras* as enjoined in the Buddhist texts had the sacred texts copied for them and deposited in a sacred place like a stupa. This also accounts for the names of the donor, his relatives and friends appearing in the colophons of some of the mss."

One of the donors mentioned is Shrideva Shahi Surrendra Vikramaditya Nanda. He appears to have been the ruler of Gilgit, and may have been related to either the Gupta rulers of Kashmir or, as Dr. Dutt points out, to Vikramaditya who ruled the Valley towards the close of the sixth century A.D. The queens of Surrendra Vikramaditya are also mentioned. They are Shami Devi Trailokeyadevi and Vihali. The scribe of the king's manuscript was named Aryasthirabuddhi and his collaborator Narendra Datta. Besides the king, the other donors mentioned are Shulkhina, Shulivajra, Mamtoti, Manglashura and Aryadevendrabhuta. The manuscripts so far edited and published include:

1. *Bhaisajyaguru-sutra* dealing with the great resolutions of the Buddha, Bhaisajyaguru-Vaidurya-Prabharaja and their effect

Bhaisajyaguru may be called the healing Buddha.

2. *Ekadashamukkham* containing two dharanis or mantras which confer several benefits on their possessor and protect him from all kinds of evil and misfortunes.
3. *Hayagrivavidya*, a dharani written on birch bark or palm leaf and worn to ward off evils and misfortunes.
4. *Sarvatathagatadhisthana - sattvavalokana - Buddhakshetra - sandarshana - vyuham*, containing dharanis for acquiring various benefits and stalling misfortunes.
5. *Ajitasena-vyakarana-nirdesha-nama-mahayana-sutra* containing a story about the merits of regarding the Buddha as the Saviour of mankind and giving alms to Buddhist monks.
6. *The Samadhiraja-sutra*. *Samadhiraja* means the king of *samadhis* or meditations. As a state of mind, it is that highest one in which one realises the basic unity of all objects despite seeming differences, and also that the supreme truth "does not admit of any description, differentiation, assertion or denial."

The other manuscripts published include *Shrimahadevivyakarnam* containing some grammatical rules, etc., and *Chivaravastu* and *Kathinavastu* containing rules about the robes of monks and nuns and how they are to be made. Among the unpublished manuscripts are the *Saddharmapundarika-sutra* and *Karandavyuha*, devoted to the exaltation of the Buddha and Avaloki-

teshvara respectively, *Vajracchedika Samghata-sutra*, *Pratimoksha-sutra* and the *Vinaya-pitaka* of the Mula Sarvastivadins. (Mula Sarvastivada was a developed form of Sarvastivada).

Buddhist stupas have not been located in Gilgit only. In addition to the four stupas which have been excavated at Naupur in Gilgit—one of these stupas yielded the Gilgit manuscripts—ruins of stupas and images of the Buddha are known to exist in Hunza, Punial, Ishkuman, Yasin and other localities surrounding Gilgit. All these territories were once strongly Buddhist and apart from Fa-Hien, there is mention of other Chinese Buddhist monks visiting them in the fifth and the sixth centuries. Two of them Che-mong and Fa-yong are believed to have visited Dardistan early in the fifth century. Sung-yun visited Chitral, Yasin, Gilgit and Baltistan about a century later. He was accompanied by a Buddhist monk, Huisheng, and had been sent by a Chinese Empress to offer presents to the Buddhist sanctuaries and bring back Buddhist texts from India. Ou-kong who came to India in the beginning of the second half of the eighth century also visited Yasin and Gilgit.

The *Census Report* for 1931 contains the following interesting observations*:

"There are two Buddhist stupas, one on the hill-side about three miles east of Gilgit and the other on the road to Nagar between Chalt and Minapin. There is a small Buddha carved on the rocks at the mouth of the Kirgah Nullah about three miles west of Gilgit and small Buddhas and Buddhist relics have been found in Yasin."

*Part I. page 321.

These facts indicate that Buddhism lingered on in this part of Kashmir State up to comparatively recent times. This is corroborated by Knight also. Writing about Dras whose population is now Muslim he says:* "We saw here large stones on which idols were carved, showing that Buddhist creed had once prevailed in this district, as it also did formerly in all the countries between the mountains we had crossed and the Hindoo Koosh range, Baltistan having adopted Mohammedanism in comparatively modern times."

That Buddhist influence still lingers on among the non-Buddhist population of these areas is clearly shown by what another European writer, Giotto Dainelli, has to say about the inhabitants of a locality near Chiktan in the Valley of Bot Karbu. Writing about the Buddhist chapel in the locality, the Italian traveller who visited Ladakh in 1930, records† that the inhabitants "who have been converted to Islam, continue nevertheless to frequent it (the chapel), and on occasions both men and women circle round it, moving in the little rhythmic steps of the Tibetan dances and wearing long, slender wreaths of flowers". He adds, "They do not pray there to Allah, their new God; they no longer pray there, as they once did, to the divinities of the multiple Olympus of the Tibetan Buddhists: they go to pray there to 'the Spirit', as they themselves told me—that is, to something above and outside all corporeal and terrestrial things."

Many of the ruined stupas which are yet to be found in Gilgit and the adjoining areas are likely to yield

*In his book *Where three Empires Meet.*

†In his book *Buddhists and Glaciers of Western Tibet.*

more manuscripts of the type found at Naupur. In fact one of the stupas at Naupur yielded three or four more manuscripts when in 1938 A.D. the then Director of the State Research and Archaeological Department, Pandit Madhusudan Kaul visited Gilgit in search of more manuscripts. But now Gilgit and the surrounding areas are under Pakistan's occupation.

THE PRESENT POSITION

CHAPTER XXIII

BUDDHIST REVIVAL IN KASHMIR STATE

We have already traced the history of Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh up to the close of Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign. The reign of his successor, Maharaja Hari Singh, is one of the greatest importance in the history of the State. For it saw not only the rise of a powerful nationalist movement for the liquidation of autocracy but also the birth of a Buddhist revival in Kashmir. The year 1931 which witnessed the first popular outburst against the shackles of autocracy also saw the beginnings of a movement for the amelioration of the lot of Buddhists in Ladakh.

Following the mass uprising of July 1931, the Maharaja appointed a Commission to inquire into the grievances, religious and secular, of the different communities inhabiting the State. The Grievances Enquiry Commission, as it came to be known, was presided over by an officer (Mr. B.J. Glancy) of the Political Department of the Government of India. Its members consisted of a representative each of the Hindus and Muslims of the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir. But the Buddhists of Ladakh who were then—as they are now—the least vocal of the communities inhabiting the State,

were given no representation on it. Their case would thus have gone without a hearing, but fortunately some public spirited Kashmiri Pandits had already taken up their cause and made it their own.

They set up an organisation known as the Kashmir Raj Bodhi Maha Sabha for the "two-fold object of propagating the Dharma (Buddhism) in a land where it once flourished with full vigour and rehabilitating the Buddhists of Ladakh....socially, politically and economically." The organisation which claimed to be the sole representative body of all the Buddhists living in Jammu and Kashmir State was affiliated with the All-India Buddhist Conference and Council and had the Head Lama of Hemis Gumpa, Kushok Stagtsang Raspa as its patron. The Sabha had its headquarters at Srinagar. Pandit Shambunath Dhar*, a Srinagar pleader, was its President and Pandit Shridhar Bhatt its Secretary.

Buddhism as a separate faith had ceased to exist in Kashmir from the close of the fifteenth century A.D. But Ladakh's merger with it towards the middle of the nineteenth century led to a revival of interest in the faith among Kashmiri Pandits. With the spread of English education among them and as a result of the archaeological discoveries and researches of eminent scholars this interest went on growing steadily till in the thirties of the present century some Kashmiri Pandits actually embraced the faith and by forming the Kashmir Raj Bodhi Maha Sabha they set themselves the task of "propagating the teachings of Buddhism and introducing social reforms, promoting education and

*Pt. Dhar is now President of the Srinagar Municipal Committee.

in general devising and enforcing measures for the uplift of Kashmir Buddhists."

Since that was a time of political upheaval in the State, the Sabha's attention was mostly devoted to drawing attention to the difficulties and hardships of the Buddhists of Ladakh. But for its strong and persistant advocacy, their case would have gone by default in the general scramble for percentages that characterised the politics of the State at that time.

By a fortunate coincidence the leaders of the Buddhist community in Ladakh also requested the Sabha to take up the cause of their brethren in that neglected region and invested it with representative powers on their behalf. The Grievances Enquiry Commission, therefore, called upon the Sabha to put forth the Buddhist case before it. Accordingly the Sabha President, appeared before the Commission and submitted a detailed memorandum, dated the 20th December, 1931, drawing the Commission's attention to the economic and educational backwardness of the Buddhists of Ladakh and outlining measures for their removal. Among other things the memorandum urged legislation for the abolition of polyandry, chang-doping and the law of inheritance under which only the eldest child inherited the ancestral property.

The Sabha was also able to interest some well-known Buddhist organisations outside Kashmir in the welfare of the Buddhists living in the State. These included the International Buddhist Mission, Thaton, Burma and the Maha Bodhi Society of India, Calcutta. The latter besides espousing their cause in its journal, held a public meeting in Calcutta on the 10th of March 1932 in

which the grievances of the Buddhists in Kashmir State were vigorously ventilated and a number of resolutions passed for their redress. The Kashmir Buddhists' cause received further support when after an on-the-spot study of the condition of the Buddhists of Ladakh in 1933, Tripitakacharya Rahul Sankrityayana and Anagarika Brahmachari Govinda (a German bhikshu) delivered a number of lectures at Srinagar and submitted representations to the Government about the difficulties and hardships of the Buddhists of Ladakh. During his stay in Ladakh Rahul Sankrityayana also wrote a number of *Readers* for Buddhist children in their own mother tongue.

Along with the memorandum about the Ladakh Buddhists, the Kashmir Raj Bodhi Maha Sabha had submitted a representation to the Grievances Enquiry Commission detailing what it called the grievances of the Srinagar Buddhists. But the Commission's *Report* contained precious little for either. Undaunted by this set-back, the Sabha went on pressing its demands again and again. The result was the allotment of some money for grant of scholarships to Buddhists of Ladakh and a promise to work the different mines in the area on improvement of the State's financial condition. The Government also offered to sanction allowances for religious preachers and social reformers who would educate public opinion along the desired lines, namely, against excessive drinking of *chang*, polyandry, promiscuous sexual relations and dirt and illiteracy.

Sometime after the dissolution of the Grievances Enquiry Commission, a Reforms Conference was held with Mr. Glancy as President. As a result of the

recommendations of the Conference and the Franchise Commission appointed by the Maharaja, a Legislative Assembly with limited powers, known as the Praja Sabha was established in the State in the year 1934. Buddhists of Ladakh were given two nominated seats in it. But as the representatives of Ladakh Buddhists were not conversant with the languages spoken in the Praja Sabha, it meant little immediate gain for them. The Srinagar Buddhists, therefore, tried their level best to see that one of the representatives was from amongst them. But this the Government rightly refused to permit.

In their representations to the Government the Srinagar Buddhists had, among other things, demanded the inclusion of *Vaishakha Poornima*—the Buddha's birthday—among the all-Kashmir public holidays, the prohibition of slaughter of animals and closure of meat shops on the day and the grant of a piece of land for the building of a *vihara* at Srinagar. While the declaration of *Vaishakha Poornima* as a public holiday had to wait till Kashmir became an integral part of the Union of India, the demand about land for the construction of a vihara in Srinagar was conceded by the Maharaja. A three-acre plot of land was given to the Sabha on lease for a period of forty years on a nominal rental of Rs. 12/- per annum. But most unfortunately a vihara in Srinagar yet remains to be built. This is partly due to the fact that the Kashmir Raj Bodh Maha Sabha's enthusiasm gradually waned after the Kashmir Government had refused to agree to its demand for permitting a Srinagar Buddhist to hold one of the Ladakh Buddhists' seats in the Praja Sabha.

Be that as it may, it cannot be denied that it was largely through the Sabha's unflinching devotion to the cause of Ladakhi Buddhists that a number of concessions were extorted for them from a Government which was none-too-keen about the amelioration of their lot. It was through its efforts that the number of schools in the frontier regions and the amount of scholarships for students there were increased. A new post of Assistant Inspector of Schools was also created to look after the education of the people in the Ladakh district and by a happy choice a Srinagar Buddhist, Pt. Shridhar Kaul (Dullu), who ardently loves the simple straight forward Buddhists across the Zojila, was appointed to it. Again, it was in no small measure due to the Sabha's sustained propaganda against the evils of polyandry that the State Government promulgated the Polyandrous Marriages Prohibition Act in 1941. Though polyandrous marriages have not yet stopped completely, the prohibition is welcomed by enlightened public opinion in Ladakh.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CRISIS AND AFTER

The worst crisis in the history of Jammu and Kashmir State came towards the end of 1947 when it was the victim of unprovoked aggression from Pakistan. Not only the integrity of the State but the very existence of non-Muslim faiths in it was at stake when tribal horders, aided and abetted by Pakistan, were let loose on the unarmed people of Kashmir in October 1947. The cruel invaders brought fire, death and destruction to the very confines of Srinagar. They spared nothing and nobody—not even Muslims and Christians. Like the ferocious Hun, Mihirakula, they had no pity for children, compassion for women or respect for the aged. In the words of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah they came "as a centrally directed force with the avowed object of subjugating our land to the vassalage of Pakistan at the point of the gun". "They scorched our land, ruined our homes, orphaned the children, despoiled the honour of women and devastated hundreds of villages." "They violated and abducted women. They massacred children. They looted everything and everyone. They even dishonoured the holy *Quran* and converted mosques into brothels."*

*The quotations are from Sheikh Abdullah's appeals for

The supreme crisis did not find the people of Kashmir lacking in those manly qualities which go to form a great people. Stirred by the dire peril with which they were faced they decided to resist the barbarous invaders. And as the old administration had virtually collapsed the people themselves, under the leadership of the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, took over the task of regulating civic life and fighting the fifth column, besides facing the enemy at the front.

But it is obvious that the unarmed Kashmiris could not long resist the ruthless invaders equipped with modern weapons. Their leaders, therefore, approached the Government of India for assistance. This assistance was not long in coming and the story of how the Indian forces, fully supported by the people of the unoccupied areas of Jammu and Kashmir, threw out the invaders from the Valley and some parts of Jammu province is well-known. Not so well-known, however, is the story of how Ladakh—the land of Buddhists—was saved.

Gilgit which had been acquired by the (British) Government of India in 1935 on a sixty-year lease was retroceded to the Maharaja following the announcement of the Partition Plan of June 3, 1947. Soon after, the Maharaja appointed a Dogra Rajput, Brigadier Ghansara Singh, as the Governor of the territory. But within about a week of the invasion of Kashmir State from Pakistan he was put under arrest by his erstwhile subordinates—The Gilgit Scouts—and a provisional government set up. Three days later, on

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assistance, issued in his capacity as the Head of the State Administration soon after the invasion.

November 4, "Major Brown, the British Commandant of the Gilgit Scouts, ceremoniously hoisted the Pakistan flag in the Scouts' Lines and in the third week of November a Political Agent from Pakistan established himself at Gilgit."*

Gilgit was thus occupied almost simultaneoulsy with the invasion of Kashmir. But the severity of winter did not permit the enemy to extend his activities to the other frontier regions till the advent of summer. After taking Dras and Kargil in the month of May, 1948 the enemy turned his attention to Skardu, which fell in the month of August, after a prolonged and heroic defence by the State garrison under Lt. Col. Sher Jung Thapa.

The fall of Gilgit had a very demoralising effect on the people of Ladakh. There were then only 40 men in the Leh Cantonment with just as many rifles. Needless to say, this meagre force was altogether inadequate to guard the long frontier line of the district and stem the advance of the invading hordes. The Youngmen's Buddhist Association of Leh, therefore, tried, with the approval of the authorities at Srinagar, to raise a militia force for the defence of their motherland. But this laudable attempt came to naught as a result mainly of the indifference of the administrative authorities at Leh. Later, in the middle of January 1948, the authorities at Srinagar entrusted the task of raising Buddhist National Guards to Pandit Shridhar Kaul, Assistant Inspector of Schools. Shri Kaul who was then at Kargil after an extensive tour of the then threatened Skardu Tehsil, immediately left for Leh where he reached towards the end of the month. Both on his way to Leh and

*Vide: *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* by V.P. Menon p. 405.

in the town he called a number of meetings of the local people and in these and their festivals he impressed upon them the supreme need of defending their motherland. Though at first the people seemed impervious to his appeals, yet finally with the active co-operation of of the Youngmen's Buddhist Association*, and especially its President Klon Chhewang Rigzin and some elder lamas he was able to enlist no less than five hundred volunteers. Notwithstanding the fact that training arrangements for them were far from adequate, the enrolment of so many volunteers had a very steadying effect on the panic-striken people.

Public morale was further strengthened with the arrival, soon after, of Lt. Col. Prithi Chand. Lt. Col. Prithi Chand who with 20 Dogras, dashed across the Zojila had been sent with the object of raising as many troops as possible from among the Ladakhis themselves. He knew the language of the people and with his arrival the work of training the recruits received a tremendous fillip. Soon he had a large number of well-trained local people at his disposal. Besides being of yoeman's service in the actual fighting, their presence inspired even those who had so far held aloof to come forth with their full cooperation in the matter of organising local defence.

The people of Ladakh contributed in the defence of their motherland in another way also. That was by constructing an airstrip at Leh under the guidance of a local engineer, Shri Sonam Nurbu. This hastily

*The Association which has been in existence since 1938 or so is now known as "The Buddhist Association, Leh".



Shri Jawaharlal Nehru in Ladakhi dress
(Courtesy, Armed Forces Information Office.)



BAKSHI GHULAM MOHAMMAD

constructed airstrip—one of the highest in the world—enabled the late Air Commodore Mehr Singh to land the first aeroplane in Leh. This was done about the same time that the enemy succeeded in cutting off the land route between Kashmir and Ladakh (by occupying Dras and Kargil). Air Commodore Mehr Singh who pioneered the air route into Leh over unchartered mountains over 20,000 ft. high, carried with him Major (now Lt.) General K. S. Thimmayya, then commanding Indian troops in Kashmir.

This landing turned out to be a turning point in the fortunes of Ladakh. Soon after General Thimmayya's on-the-spot survey of the situation in May 1948, a company of Gurkhas was flown to Leh to reinforce the garrison there. Another company of Gurkhas under Major Hari Chand was dispatched via Manali.

Pt. Shridhar Kaul was again of great service in facilitating the early arrival of this company in Leh. As soon as information was received at Leh that a company of Gurkhas was on its way thither through Kulu, Shri Kaul was asked by the local Commandant to organise transport and to proceed to meet the troops en route. This he willingly did. He carried with him about one hundred and fifty yaks and ponies. His way lay over a dreary difficult plateau over 13,000 ft. high with no human habitation. He, therefore, built large heaps of roots (fuel wood is very scarce in Ladakh) en route for use by the incoming troops. He also made suitable arrangements for supply of milk and meat to them at different stages. The result was that when the troops at last crossed the Lachunlung La they found

transport, etc., waiting for them. Shri Kaul's prudence in having made provision for fuel, milk and meat considerably lightened the rigours of the journey for the Gurkhas and they were in Leh before it was too late. They reached their destination on July 10 after twenty-five days' journey.

The Indian troops were then faced with a two-front war—on the Indus front and on the Shyok-Nubra front.

Hostile pressure on Leh tehsil increased enormously after the fall of Skardu in August 1948. Our troops therefore, decided to shorten their perimeter. Accordingly they adjusted their lines on the Shyok front and on the Indus front fell back about fifty miles—from Dhumkar to Tharu. On the Indus front the enemy was now within twelve miles of Leh and on the Shyok front about sixty miles.

With the arrival of another battalion of Gurkhas towards the middle of September, the Indian Army in Ladakh had at last got a sufficient force to check the enemy's advance but the problem of supplies remained. For these had to be flown in over a 20,000 ft. high mountainous route.

The enemy tried to take advantage of this situation and made several attempts to infiltrate through the Indian defences. These attempts were not only thwarted by our troops but they in turn hit back, inflicting serious losses on the enemy. On one occasion a batch of Indian soldiers and Ladakhi militiamen led by Major Hari Chand succeeded in destroying at Basgo, nine miles from Tharu, a mountain gun which the enemy was bringing to reduce the defences of Leh or at

least render the local airstrip unserviceable. Major Hari Chand was helped by a Ladakhi boy in spotting the house in which the gun was kept at that time. On another occasion Major Hari Chand succeeded in destroying an enemy convoy carrying ammunition and supplies at Lamayuru, 60 miles west of Leh.

In November 1948 the Indian troops in Kashmir under Brigadier K. L. Atal effected a heroic break-through the enemy positions around Zojila and after capturing Dras and Kargil linked up with the Leh garrison. With this historic link-up which was brought about with the help of tanks, the hostiles—numbering several hundreds—beat a hasty retreat on both the Indus and Shyok fronts and thus the threat to Leh was completely removed.

In his advance to Leh, Brigadier Atal had the unstinted cooperation of all the local people who had not fled their homes or been killed by the raiders. In fact it was a Muslim named Abdul Rehman (Zaildar of Kharbu village near Kargil) who along with his nephew Ghulam Nabi, voluntarily guided the Indian troops from Dras to Kargil. Earlier these two patriotic Muslims had refused to cooperate with the raiders when they asked them to build a bridge over the Shingo river to facilitate their capture of Kargil. Ladakhi Buddhists who will long be remembered for the defence of their motherland are Chhewang Rigzin, President, Buddhist Association, Kaga Rigzin Namgyal and Chhewang Rinchen of Nubra.

An idea of the threat involved to Ladakh can be had from the fact that at one time the hostiles were within a dozen miles of Leh. But thanks to the combined

efforts of the Indian Army and the Air Force and the local people this "most westerly country professing the Buddhist faith" was saved along with its priceless heritage of art, sculpture and ancient manuscripts, contained in its many monasteries.

Hostilities in Ladakh, as in the other parts of the State, ceased with the cease-fire on the first of January 1949—permanently, we hope!

The invasion of Ladakh brought many hardships to the people and the troops. The farmers could not plough their land in many areas. Also, as a result of the invasion of the Valley and later due to the occupation of Dras and Kargil, supplies to Ladakh from Kashmir were cut off.

The caravan trade also came to a stop. This meant a sharp increase in prices and great privation to the local population. The troops also had to suffer many hardships. In the initial stages they had to subsist on what the local people would part with from their scanty stocks. For weeks they had to take *sattu*, tea, etc.,—a not very welcome diet to a non-Ladakhi. Also, they were without medical cover and without sufficient warm clothing.

But the invasion of Ladakh brought it nearer to Kashmir and the rest of the country. Soldiers from all parts of India contributed to the defence of the territory. Even in the darkest days when danger threatened on all sides Indian troops willingly shared their own limited supplies with the local population. Their doctors rendered them much needed medical aid.

The arrival of the Indian soldier opened up a new chapter in Ladakh in another way. The peace-loving



Kushok Stagsang Raspa
of Hemis Gumpa



Pt. Shridhar Kaul (Dullu)
Vice-President: Kashmir Raj
Bodhi Maha Sabha, Srinagar.



Klon Chhewang Rigzon
President: Buddhist Association, Leh.



Kushok Bakula of
Spituk Gumpa



Late Air Commodore Mehr Singh.



Late Brigadier K. L. Atal.

Ladakhi was not only provided with a long delayed opportunity to undergo military training but for the first time in recent history he got an adequate wage for services rendered. He was no longer exploited under the hated *Res* system. The Ladakhi porter was paid Rs. 2/- per day and for every yak, *zhu* or donkey he got Rs. 3/8/-. This was the highest wage ever paid in Ladakh. Bridle paths were widened and new roads and bridges built. Above all, the threat to Leh brought it on the air map of India and today Ladakh is no longer a far-away territory walled off by high mountain barriers. It is about an hour's distance from Srinagar and above five hours' from Delhi.

Kashmir's accession to India has not only ended the ages-old isolation of Ladakh but has made it an object of interest to even the highest in the land. The Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru himself paid a visit to Ladakh early in July 1949.

The Prime Minister's visit was a matter of great significance to the people of Ladakh. For about a century the highest officer to visit Ladakh had seldom been above the rank of a Wazir-i-Wazarat or District Officer. But now when Ladakh was a part of independent India, it commanded the attention and interest of the very highest in the land.

Nothing could have brought home to the Ladakhi the democratic import of the Government at Delhi better than the Prime Minister's visit. And as elsewhere, Pandit Nehru, by his easy informality, transparent sincerity and the warmth of his affection won the hearts of these simple, unsophisticated people. He

mixed with them freely, visited their religious and other institutions, attended their receptions, dances and singing, received their deputations, listened to their grievances and difficulties patiently and assured them all assistance in their removal. At the same time he reminded them that they too had a part to play in their uplift and regeneration.

Pandit Nehru who arrived at Leh on the morning of July 4, was accompanied by the then Prime Minister of Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. The Indian Prime Minister's visit thus became an occasion for the Kashmir Prime Minister also to visit this thus-far-neglected region.

Pandit Nehru's visit to Ladakh in a way marks the beginning of democracy in that territory. For the first political elections ever to be held in Ladakh were held then. Kushak Bakula, Head Lama of the Yellow Sect of Buddhists was elected President of the local National Conference. A Tehsil Advisory Committee was also elected. At Panditji's suggestion, the audience decided to elect a woman member to it—the member elected being one Mrs. S. Dolma.

Replying to an address of welcome presented to him by the citizens of Leh on July 7, the Prime Minister said, "Ladakh is no longer far away ; but whether we are near to each other or far away, we are all children of India and we shall face all our problems together." He complimented the Ladakhis on the courageous manner in which they had faced the invasion.

During his stay in Ladakh the Prime Minister visited some of the well-known gumpas, including Hemis,

the most famous of them all. As already stated, Hemis is a monastery of the Red Sect of Buddhists. Pandit Nehru presented to the Head Lamas of Red and Yellow Sects one set each of an ivory casket containing photographs of the Buddha at Sarnath, the Sanchi Stupa, the Bodh Gaya Temple and two satuettes of the Buddha, one in bronze and the other in stone.

In a reference to the prevailing faith, the Prime Minister said, "Buddhism is the prevailing religion here and so Buddhist religion and learning must be encouraged and helped. You know that Buddhism came from India; rest assured that Buddhism and Buddhist institutions here will receive every possible opportunity for development." Pandit Nehru, however, appealed to the elderly exponents of the Buddhist religion in Ladakh to remove evils that had crept into their institutions and help in raising the moral and material standards of the people. He also told them : "It has long been my cherished desire that we should study your ancient manuscripts and other works with the help of your wise and learned men to our and to your advantage."

The year 1950 will long be remembered in the history of Buddhism in Kashmir State. For in May that year the sacred relics of Sariputra and Mahamoggallana, chief disciples of the Buddha, were flown to the State in fulfilment of Pandit Nehru's promise to the Ladakhi Buddhist to do so.

The relics were received at the Srinagar aerodrome by Kushok Bakula at about noon on the 25th of May. Those present on the occasion included Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, then Deputy Prime Minister of Kashmir,

the Military Secretary to the Yuvraj, and two representatives of Kashmir Buddhists.

The sacred relics were flown to Leh from Srinagar on the morning of May 26. As was but expected, they were received with great joy and enthusiasm in the town. Two thousand lamas cheered loudly and raised invocations to the Buddha and other gods as the relics were brought down from the plane by Kushok Bakula and then taken to the Shankar Gumpa in a picturesque procession. Lamas of both the sects were present. Kushok Bakula, who heads the Yellow Sect said in an interview, "This is the proudest day in my life and in the life of my people. Our gratitude to Pandit Nehru and India is immense."

The relics were kept in Ladakh for about two and a half months during which they were taken to the various monasteries where thousands of devotees paid their homage to them. The party accompanying the relics covered a journey of six hundred miles and had to cross several high mountain passes including the 18,000 ft. high snowbound Hardum La. On their return journey to India, the relics were kept in the State's chief Guest House at Srinagar where hundreds of people, including the authors of this book, paid their homage to them.

Yuvraj Karan Singh and the Yuvrani paid a four-day visit to Ladakh in the third week of September 1952. This was the first time that a member of the ruling Dogra dynasty visited the place. On September 20, the Yuvraj presented a 400-year old image of the Buddha to the monastery at Leh.

Though during Pandit Nehru's visit to Ladakh Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah had assured the people that it would always be his Government's endeavour to entrust the administration of Ladakh to the people of Ladakh and give them all possible help and assistance, yet unfortunately little progress towards that happy consummation was achieved during his regime and it was left to Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, his successor in the office of Prime Minister, to translate his promise into reality.

August 9, 1953, when Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed assumed the Prime Ministership of Jammu and Kashmir State, marks the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Ladakh. Kushok Bakula, the solitary representative of Ladakhi Buddhists in the State Legislature was made Deputy Minister for Ladakh Affairs, thus fulfilling a long-standing demand of the Ladakhis for representation in the State Cabinet.

As Kushok Bakula said in a speech in the Kashmir State Assembly last year "Ladakh is no longer treated as a colony" but "its people are now admitted as equal partners, with those of the other component units of the State, to the counsels and tasks designed to speed up the pace of the State in its forward march."

Numerous schemes have been initiated for the rapid development of this neglected area. Canals are being dug to increase food production and trees planted to remove the chronic scarcity of fuel and timber in the area. Communications are being rapidly developed. The Srinagar-Kargil jeep road (about 117 miles in length) which was made by the Army

about seven years ago is being extended to Leh. A jeep road from Leh to Hemis has already been constructed. A survey for the electrification of Leh has been concluded and another for the electrification of Kargil is under way. A number of measures have been taken to increase the production of *pashmina* wool and to develop the trade in it. Cloth, sugar, rice and other commodities are made available to people at almost the prices prevailing in Srinagar and facilities for education and medical aid are being multiplied.

The State Education Ministry, headed by Mr. Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq, is keenly aware of the educational needs of this backward area. Already about three dozen new schools have been opened in the district during the last three years and a boarding house has been constructed at Leh for students from the outlying areas. The dispensaries at Kargil and Leh have been converted into hospitals, the last with twenty beds. Three more dispensaries are being opened in the district. The State's second Five-Year Plan contains a substantial allotment for Ladakh. Provision has been made for Ladakh's representation in the two Houses of the State Legislature under the new Constitution of the State. The Government of India's anxiety for the prosperity and advancement of the frontier areas is reflected in the appointment of a Special Officer to look after their development.

As a result of the increased attention on the part of the Government of India and the State Government, Ladakh is once again in full possession of its soul, as it were. Kushok Bakula who represents the Buddhists

of Ladakh in the State Cabinet has already paid visits to the Buddhist countries of Burma and Tibet. He attended the Third Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists at Rangoon in December 1954, as leader of the Ladakhi delegation. The delegation included the Srinagar Buddhist Pt. Shridhar Kaul also. Kushok Bakula went to Tibet in November last year, as the head of a cultural mission sponsored by the Government of India. In Tibet he had two audiences with the Dalai Lama and attended a special sermon given by His Holiness at the Potala. Kushok Bakula is also a member of the Committee set up by the Central Government in connection with the celebration of the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's *Mahaparinirvana*. The Committee has Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, as its Chairman and the Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru is closely associated with its work.

Buddha Jayanti this year was celebrated throughout Ladakh with great joy and enthusiasm. The main function was held at Leh, Headquarters of the District on the 24th of May. About one thousand lamas and fifteen thousand lay devotees participated, some of them having come from Nubra and Chang-than, areas separated from Leh by over 17,000 ft. high snow-clad passes of Khardung La and Chang La. The State Government was represented by Pt. Shamlal Saraf, Development Minister and Mr. Ghulam Rasool Renzu, Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly.

The celebrations of the day started early in the morning when a golden image of the Buddha from Shankar Gumpa was taken out in procession. The

procession which comprised thousands of people was led by the Kushoks of Hemis and Spituk. Lamas in their colourful robes carried burning incense, chanted hymns and blew conches and pipes. After passing through the main bazaar, decorated with arches and banners, the procession terminated in a *maidan* (open piece of level ground) in the heart of the town, where the Buddhist flag was unfurled and learned discourses delivered on the Buddha and his teachings. At a public meeting in the evening a number of speakers—Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist—paid their homage and tributes to the Buddha. The whole town was brilliantly illuminated at night.

Now that Ladakh is no longer a neglected far away territory but with the rest of Jammu and Kashmir State is taking rapid strides towards material advancement, it is hoped that Buddhism will again shine there in its pristine glory and shed lustre on this land of the Buddha's birth, which in its resurgent independent career has deliberately chosen an Ashokan symbol as the State Emblem.

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ERRATA

Please read 'Pandrethan' for 'Pandnthan' on the first illustration page.

On	page	11	line	9	read	'persuasion'	for	'pursuasion'
"	"	23	"	20	"	'sub-sect'	"	'subject'
"	"	46	"	11	"	'and on'	"	'an don'
"	"	49	"	8	"	'persuaded'	"	'presuaded'
"	"	75	"	14	"	'victory'	"	'vicotry'
"	"	89	"	5	"	'sixth'	"	'sixty'
"	"	109	"	30	"	'of'	"	'o'
"	"	117	"	2	"	'capital'	"	'capit.al'
"	"	121	"	31	"	'endowments'	"	'endoments'
"	"	131	title line		"	'TIBET'	"	'TIBERT'
"	"	146	line	14	"	'goddesses'	"	'goddess'
"	"	148	"	8	"	'threw off'	"	'threw of'
"	"	151	"	4	"	'barber'	"	'barbar'
"	"	161	"	17	"	'Bhavani-'Sahasranamam'	"	'Bhavani-'Shasranamam'
"	"	164	"	2	"	'Maheshvar Nath'	for	'Makeshvar Nath'
"	"	182	"	9	"	'acknowledging'	"	'acknowleding'
"	"	221	"	5	"	'hordes'	"	'horders'

On pages 141 and 155 paras 2 read 'Marco Polo' for 'Morco Polo'.
On pages 118 and 124 line 4 delete 'the' before *Valgamatha* and *Baladhyamatha* respectively.